

SLAG & GOLD

A TALE OF THE PORcupINE TRAIL

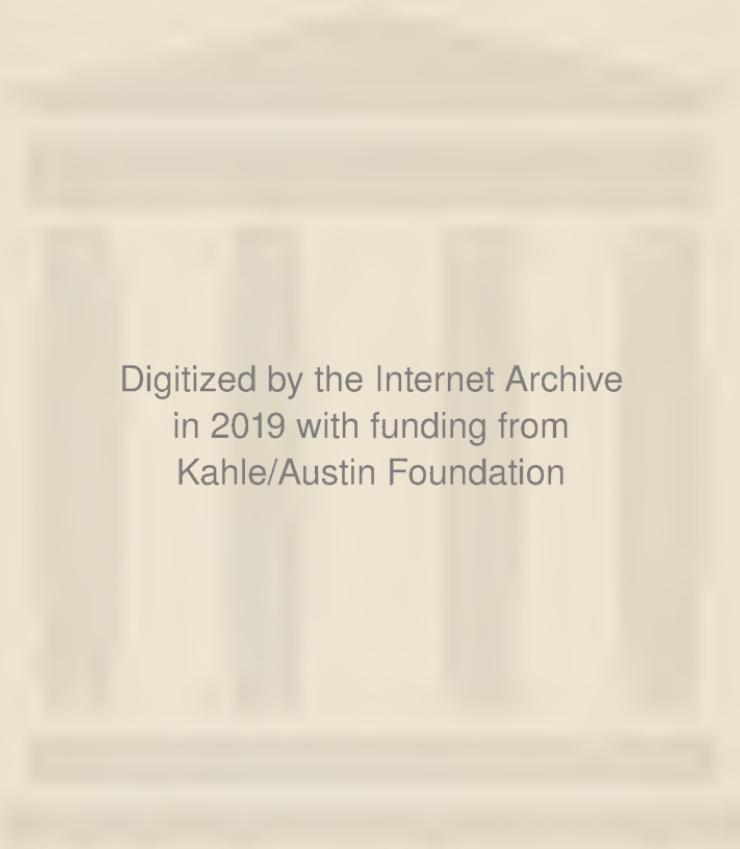


by
Don H. Moore

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SLAG AND GOLD

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A Tale of the Porcupine Trail

By

PHIL. H. MOORE
AUTHOR OF "WITH GUN AND ROD IN CANADA"

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CHAPTER I

OLDFIELD, Nevada, was the centre of a swirling cloud of alkali dust. Hardly six months out of the cradle of men's imaginative minds, it grew like a distorted infant, a metropolis in swaddling clothes. At that early age it already had the same variety of characters, and those without character, as "San Fran" or Salt Lake. The faro layouts were the same; bar fixtures of sorts were housed by canvas instead of brick; hotels in tents, but still hotels in practice; restaurants in shacks, but serving broiled chicken and champagne; gamblers, brokers, ministers, mormons, merchants, mule-teers, miners, majors, minors, minions of the law, and breakers thereof, some ladies and many women,—all were there; and the stinging dust made them feverish, and the gold nuggets—restless.

Two of the above mentioned women stood chatting in front of Mike's Dancing Saloon and Refreshment Emporia. It was noon and sunny; that is, when the dust permitted the rays to filter through to the writhing human ant-hill.

"She don't do nothin' but sew and foller him round from camp to camp since she had that kid," complained one, scorn curling her carmen

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lip as she glanced across the street at a graceful, hurrying figure leading a little boy by the hand.

"Oh, I don't know," essayed the other, tossing her blond curls disdainfully. "She pretends she don't—to him! But I wouldn't trust them goody-goody dames that aint always been so darn virtuous. She's just one of us after all. We don't reform; we just nacherlly burns out. Come on, let's go in and have a Collins. 'S'on me!"

The two disappeared through a side door of Mike's lumber and canvas amphitheatre of joy and song.

George Winfeld was a gambler,—one of the white kind. The lady before referred to went by the name of Mrs. Winfeld. The little boy was called "The Kid," and even had his mother given him a Christian name, no one was curious about it, so the frail little chap answered to just "Kid,"—to the convenience of all parties concerned.

A few moments after their passage down the dusty fareway they entered the side door of Winfeld's "Palace," and passed up narrow stairs to a spacious wall-boarded office and were greeted by the boss himself.

"Hello, girlie, you look as pretty as a pinto pony in that spotted coat. How's The Kid? Come here, son, and kiss your daddy!" Such was George's pleasant welcome.

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"Pass the same favor along, George," laughed the pretty mother. "I am getting terribly jealous of The Kid."

The man rose and caught her in his arms and kissed her with a smack like a freighter's bullwhip. If emphasis proved anything Mrs. Winfeld had small reason for jealousy.

In the meantime The Kid climbed up in his father's chair and gravely continued the game of solitaire his sire had been playing.

"That Kid handles cards better than I can myself," grinned George proudly to the doubtful mother.

"Oh, I wish he didn't," she sighed.

"Why?" snapped the elder Winfeld. "As long as he's square, it's all right. It is as decent a business as being a broker, or for that matter, a legit' banker, ain't it?"

"Oh, I don't know. People don't seem to think so, and—and I'd like our boy to be—" she hesitated lest she hurt the feelings of her lord.

"What people?" inquired the gambler kindly. "Who's been talking to you anyway? You've hooked up with me, a gambler, and always seem to like it. We aint the kind to get fussy over what them there highbrows think of us, see?"

"It's not that, George," pleaded the mother. "It's just a feeling I have, that's all."

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"Well, you mustn't have such feelin's. When you do, just remember what sort of a life I took you from, and thank God you are partners with an honest gambler."

"Honest!" suddenly blazed the woman. "Honest, to be sure; but why are you teaching that child to feel for pin-pricks in the cards? That's not honest!"

"Oh, hell, girlie!" exclaimed George in a tone of disgust. "The Kid has got to be equipped with all the tricks of the trade. I never used a marked card in my life when playin' with honest men. But what would we do now if I should line up against a bunch of them slick sharps from the east aiming to nail my hide on their barn door, if I didn't have the skill as well as the nerve to play 'em at least on even terms? We'd be broke, that's what," he finished triumphantly.

"That's all right for us, George, but The Kid don't need to know those tricks. He isn't going to be a gambler."

"The hell he aint!" exclaimed the man in a surprised tone; then noticing the look of disappointment upon the mother's face he amended, "Well, anyway, girlie, he's goin' to know all I can teach him about bein' on the square, and at the same time *smooth* with them little hands of his. It keeps him amused and out of mischief."

The mother sighed. "I know, George, that you

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don't understand the feeling I have about his being a gambler. And you never let me forget my past life, nor our present relations. But I have a longing to see our boy grow up into something better than his parents are. So there!"

"Tut, tut, girlie, it's all right with me whatever he gets to be, so it's on the level. Come here!"

This command the woman obeyed, and her man's caresses allayed, but did not make her forget, her ambition for her "Kid."

At twelve years of age The Kid could bank any game in his father's layout, and did it with a shrewdness far beyond his years. It was Winfield's greatest pleasure to deliberately step down from the banker's stool when the game was running high and against the house and nod to a grave faced and delicate little lad to "take the deck." The boy's luck was proverbial. Woe to the worshipper of the god, Chance, that had the temerity to double his stakes or to play a loose game when The Kid was at the wheel. The tide would turn and the golden flood would pour into the coffers of the house.

"The Kid's a hoodoo!" complained one.

"You can't beat the little rascal," admired another.

"Watch them little pink fingers," would warn a third. "They're quicker'n a snake's tongue!"

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All this was nuts for George but torture to The Kid's mother. She tried to offset his father's influence by such schooling and musical education as the camp afforded. If she could have conceived the notion of leaving the man she loved so passionately she would have taken the child away. With a natural love for pretty things and excitement she saw no possible method of supporting her boy in comfort and semi-respectability if she left his father. She had a discriminating instinct in teaching her child the ethics of life without having had the mental training to practice all that she taught. The Kid took naturally to music. An itinerant artist was solicited to give him drawing and painting lessons. When the lad was not gravely assisting his sire he spent his time drawing little sketches of the characters of the kaleidoscopic town, or with his nose in a book of fairy tales or history. His attendance at school was spasmodic but accompanied without apparent difficulty by brilliant results. He was too sophisticated and too used to the characteristics of rough men to find healthful pleasure in the society of children. On one occasion when he was bullied and then well thrashed by a larger boy he did not cry, but white with anger he had gone to his father and in all seriousness had demanded an automatic pistol.

“What for, my lad?” asked the astonished

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parent, at the same time looking at the boy's cruelly battered face.

"I am going to shoot up that Buck Taylor," The Kid replied savagely.

"Why?" asked George Winfeld quietly, and with perfect respect in his voice.

"He licked me, and I am going to kill him." The boy's voice was as cold as ice.

"What did you do?"

"Nothing. I refused to pitch nickels with some of the boys. Mother don't like it, and I told him so."

An amused smile lurked behind the neat mustache of Winfeld the Gambler.

"So that's it, eh? Then what did he do?"

"He called mother a name!"

"The damned skunk!" exclaimed the elder man grinding his teeth.

He patted the boy thoughtfully on the head.

"Then what?"

"I told him he was a liar and he licked me."

"Couldn't you fight back?"

"I don't know how. Mother says it is not gentlemanly. Give me a gun, father, and I'll fight him like a gentleman."

"Now, son, listen. It is not square to use a gun when the other fellow can't. I've taught you to use one just so that when you grow up you can kill game to eat, or protect yourself in case

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of a hold-up, or something. But never use one in a personal quarrel unless your life is actually threatened. You must learn to fight with your hands."

"Mother says—" began the puzzled boy.

"Wait, Kid," broke in the father confidentially, "we men have to decide some things without advice from the ladies. You are pretty small to tackle that Taylor boy, but I guess we can manage it."

"How?" demanded the Kid.

"I'll see that you have some boxing lessons. In a couple of months you can walk up to that Buck Taylor and give him a chance to apologize. If he won't, lick him."

"When can I begin, dad?" asked The Kid eagerly.

"To-day," promised his father, and forthwith lessons were begun under the tutelage of a clever feather-weight fighter then sojourning in Goldfield.

No student of boxing ever took his lessons with more serious interest than The Kid. Naturally wiry, though of a deceiving frailness, he made up in speed and steam what he lacked in bone and muscle. As McTigue the fighter, expressed it, after two months training:

"Dat Kid is a terror and quicker'n chain lightning. I have to mind me phiz, or he'd black

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me lamps every damn lesson. He can lick his weight in wildcats when he grows a little more bone."

"All right, Mac. What do I owe you?" said the pleased father.

"Nothin', nothin' a-tall. It's been fun fer me."

A trio of double gold eagles crossed his palm nevertheless, and with promises to keep the boy in training for the rest of the year for that stake, the brawny fighter slouched out of Winfeld's office.

With characteristic reserve The Kid said nothing to his father of his intentions. After school one day he walked over to Buck Taylor and without any preliminaries punched the older boy in the nose. Before the tears caused by the stinging blow on that sensitive organ had subsided enough to enable the astonished Buck to even see the cause of his discomfiture, The Kid demanded,

"Apologize, you big piece of cheese, for what you said about my mother!"

At last discovering his undersized opponent, Buck with a roar of rage rushed upon him, both arms flying, in wild frenzy.

Smack! Smack! Buck was staggered by two hissing wallops in his eyes. Again he rushed,—at an apparent void. His antagonist

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danced about him, but always out of reach. The gathering crowd hooted its encouragement.

“Soak him, Kid!”

“Catch a holt of him, Buck!”

Again Buck rushed in, head down, groping blindly for The Kid. If he could only get him in his arms his superior weight would enable him to throw and annihilate his foe. A sizzling left uppercut caught Buck square in the mouth and straightened him up. Then Crack! Crack! And Buck went down. A right cross-counter over Buck’s untrained left and a left swing with all the force of the Kid’s eager body had done the trick. Buck was out!

In its amazement the crowd was silent. As Buck opened his eyes he felt a hand gripping his throat and he looked into the pale face of the triumphant Kid, the latter now kneeling on the fallen bully’s inert body.

“Apologize, you skunk!” hissed the Kid, “or I’ll hit you again!”

Buck, hurt, and as scared of the expression on his enemy’s face as he was of the menacing and upraised fist so close to his smarting nose, complied.

“I apologize for what I said about your—mother,” he blubbered. “Let me up!”

“Louder, you big dub!” demanded the Kid. Buck again complied, and The Kid allowed

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him to get up and slouch away, too thoroughly whipped to even essay a muttered threat of vengeance.

The Kid received the many congratulations of the bystanders indifferently and walked home to his father. He would see his mother later.

“It’s funny how a feller gits licked fer tellin’ the truth,” observed one, a dull onlooker, as the crowd melted away.

“Yes, but it’s not The Kid’s fault, at that,” replied another.

CHAPTER II

IN a year or two Goldfield reached the apex of her fame. For a number of years after that the bustling town held its own but lured no new population. Then the sad decline usual to mushroom mining towns began. Her quota of prospectors and speculators drifted away to other fields of endeavor. A great "flotation" of her most famous mine was made on the New York curb, backed by unscrupulous brokers and more or less world famous actors and other professional men. The public was swindled out of millions, and the great mine operations dwindled to a mere grub-stake for contractors and "tributaries." The shafts caved in and the buildings rotted down. Coyotes yapped where great hoisting engines had puffed sturdily to hoist the gold-bearing ore to the surface. A fire had swept through a part of the town and the charred ruins but added to the appearance of delapidation. The places of amusement and gambling halls were empty and dismantled, and crippled shutters swung drunkenly to every dusty breeze, while hollow-eyed window spaces stared and stared at the deserted dumps.

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Like the Arabs of old the gamblers had folded their tents and quietly stolen away. Winfeld was one of the last to leave. Ill health took him to a hospital in San Francisco. There he died. The Kid was but little equipped to stem the tide of grief that ravaged his mother. She passed away in her boy's arms. The doctors said it was an overdose of morphine. The Kid, terribly distressed and not understanding why such things had to be, did the best he could to bear up under his troubles. Lawyers salvaged but little from his father's estate. One exquisite diamond ring set in platinum and jet and a sheaf of papers representing uncollectable I.O.U.'s was the extent of the property that came to him. But he had inherited from his father an ambition to be called "square," and from his mother an instinctive love for the refinements of the supercivilized.

Left to his own resources he worked as a dealer in a gambling house; then as a bookmaker; he chalked up stock quotations on a black-board in a brokerage office; he speculated in mining shares and collected three thousand dollars. Tiring of "San Fran." he went to Nome intending to go inland, but cold weather nearly killed him, so he went south again and worked his way east clerking, dealing or loaf-

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ing, as his pocket-book or his inclinations dictated.

At twenty, in appearance he was a tough looking and undersized young fellow with brilliant teeth and fine blue eyes, but with a certain cold grimness of expression, almost forbidding in one so young. He had always managed to keep up a system of exercises advised by McTigue. He often boxed in preliminary exhibitions in the lightweight class. Strange to say he was never whipped; but this fact did not seem to make him ambitious to get into the limelight of the pugilistic world. At a glance one would have sized him up as an ordinary young chap of the ne'er-do-weel class. A closer acquaintance would have uncovered other and better characteristics. He seldom spoke unless spoken to and never "talked." At times he would amuse barroom habitues by sleight-of-hand tricks with cards. His chief amusement seemed to be playing the piano and fondling a pack of cards. He would, when standing, or lounging, riffle the deck that he always carried, or do idle little stunts with them. His fingers were those of an artist,—long and tapering. When he boxed he bandaged his hands most carefully so as not to disfigure or cripple his delicate digits. And he always wore his father's diamond ring, except when boxing.

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When the Porcupine gold rush took place in northern Ontario The Kid was time-keeping on the main line of the T. & N.O. railway, then under construction. He threw up his job and went into the Porcupine district a few weeks after the discovery of the Big Dome Mine. Born and brought up in gold rush camps he felt immediately at home. He staked several claims and was a partner in others. Then he started a "Black-jack" game, sometimes called vingt-et-un. It was against the law, but that meant nothing in his young life. He bought other claims and speculated in a small way, and finally staked one that seemed to him to be in a locality likely to prove popular. In the early days of Porcupine the country was so covered with muskeg that a claim showing bed-rock was considered a good bet as compared to one showing only a little drift that answered for a discovery of ore. The Kid's claim was such a prospect, and he treated indifferently the offers of a few hundred dollars that he received for it. The claim was so situated that it seemed to The Kid as though some day a nearby large mining company would need the ground and would pay a good price to get it.

So he hung on and watched his game of "Black-jack" at night, and, working as time-keeper at one of the mines by day, bided his

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time. Curiously enough he never gambled himself, but simply let those so inclined use a large room that he rented. He kept the game straight and drew down the proceeds of a special "kitty" as room rent. As far as the denizens of Porcupine were concerned they had no idea that their host had ever taken part in a game of chance in his life, nor were they aware of his wonderful skill in juggling a pack of cards. Something in his demeanor commanded their respect and The Kid's place was the Mecca of the more respectable class of miners and mining engineers who liked the excitement of a little game in semi-privacy.

One Sunday, after the strike on the Dome Extension claim (which adjoined that of the Kid's) he was looking over his investment. While so doing he chanced to climb up on a ledge of rock. Seating himself in a sunny spot out of the wind he drowsed in pure physical enjoyment of the warmth and freshness of the early northern fall weather. There was a light growth of timber upon his property and, he thought, just the right size for mine timbers. Stunted bushes and tamarack sprouted from every little crevice of the broken protrusion of schist that made up the ledge upon which he was sitting. As he idly speculated as to the value of his claim he was startled to hear a series of whines and squeaks

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from behind some bushes about a rod from where he sat and apparently upon the same projecting shelf of rock. He listened quietly and heard it again distinctly. Was it the young of some wild animal? He felt for his automatic and with characteristic directness proceeded to investigate. He parted the bushes from behind which the noise had issued and disclosed a small cave. In the dimness of its limited interior something moved and two eyes glared at him from out the gloom. A warning growl made him cock his gun. As his sight grew accustomed to the dimness of the miniature cavern, he made out the form of a huge dark colored mother dog lying upon her side and suckling four tiny snuggling pups.

The Kid was fond of dogs and tried to coax the mother to come out and get acquainted; but surly growls were her only response to his cajoleries, so tossing her the remains of the hearty lunch that he had in his knapsack, he gave up his efforts to inveigle her into closer relations and started for Golden City, that part of the camp where he had his quarters.

The next noon he again visited his claim and this time he carried a huge chunk of meat. He found the family at home and received the same surly greeting from the reclining mother. When he tossed scraps of meat into the den he was sur-

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prised to note that the old dog reached out to get them with her muzzle, but appeared to be loath to get up. At first he thought that her inaction was due to a desire not to disturb her suckling pups, but her greediness in snapping up the morsels that fell within reach of her jaws pointed to her being exceedingly hungry. The Kid ventured nearer. The old bitch showed every tooth in her great head. She growled wickedly. He tossed her another fragment. She caught and swallowed it with a snap. He edged closer and repeated the offering. She warned him away. Little by little he alternately, but very, very carefully, stepped nearer and tossed meat to her hungry jaws. When he was well within the shadow of the cave and his eyes were quite accustomed to the twilight he spoke to the dog sharply and told her to "get up!" She growled again and slowly raised her great body until she was sitting upon her haunches. She made distinct attempts to raise her hind quarters, but each time she whined pitifully and let them slump sidewise to the ground. Then The Kid noticed that her still blind puppies were little more than skeletons. At once he took in the situation. The dog was crippled and could not move. He threw nearly all the remainder of the meat to the tortured beast and left the cave.

"I must get water for her," he muttered, and

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at a loss for a better receptacle he took his Stetson hat and filled it from a nearby spring. Returning to the improvised kennel he entered and speaking softly to the snarling dog he edged as close as he dared and then spattered a little water on her with his fingers. When the first drops touched her she fairly foamed at the mouth in her impotent rage. When a more generous sprinkling laved her feverish head she dodged and then licked her chops eagerly. She lapped the ground where it had been moistened by the falling spray. The Kid spattered her again, and she held her grateful muzzle to the cooling shower and whined. That was the signal that The Kid had been waiting for. He boldly placed the hat full of water on the ground within her reach, and without removing his grip from the brim he bade her drink. She plunged her dry nose into the water and lapping noisily had in a thrice drained the improvised dipper. The Kid then drew it back, always casually talking to the nervous animal in a soothing voice.

He went again to the spring and filled the hat and watered the poor mother dog with less caution than before. Six times he had filled his hat and the brute had emptied it before she slaked her thirst. The young fellow did not venture to pat his new acquaintance before he left, but as he stood talking to her he saw the end

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of her tail make several friendly little taps on the ground, whereupon she would whine and then growl with pain.

As it was getting late The Kid hurried back to the mine, planning as he went on ways and means to feed and water his new charges until he could get the old dog's confidence enough to enable him to give her some surgical care, or at the worst put her out of her misery and save her pups.

That afternoon he had one of the carpenters make him a long shallow trough cunningly jointed together so that it would not leak. Then he purchased some dried fish, such as is used for dog food in the north woods. He also procured three dozen cans of evaporated milk, three loaves of bread and a bucket. Ladened with these spoils and a pair of blankets he returned to his claim.

The crippled bitch changed her snarl to a whine when she recognized her late benefactor. The latter lost no time in placing one end of the trough within her reach. Then he filled his bucket at the spring and poured a little water into the trough. He punctured a can of milk and poured the contents also into the trough. The dog drank eagerly. He fed her a couple of fish and she begged for more. He gave her instead some bread dipped in water. The pups

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were already looking better, as their distended little bellies showed.

By the aid of his lantern, for it was long since dark, The Kid gathered wood and built a fire in the mouth of the den. Wrapping his blankets about him he produced the inevitable pack of cards and played solitaire in the flickering light. The warmth permeated the cave and the old dog relaxed and seemed to sleep. The Kid smiled with satisfaction as he heard the pups sucking at their mother's rapidly filling udders. Twice that night he watered and fed his charge and when he left her at daylight he filled the trough with diluted milk. As he finished provisioning his patients he at last ventured to caress the old dog. At first she curled her lip nervously, but thought better of it and let the Kid rest his hand firmly upon her neck without further protest.

“Goodby, Old Girl,” he said playfully. “See you tonight,” and with a last glance over his arrangements he left the cave and hurried back to the mine in time to breakfast and to check the day-shift as it went on.

That same night he persuaded a doctor to accompany him to the claim. After again feeding the old dog they succeeded in giving her enough chloroform to enable them to examine her injuries. They found that she was suffering from

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a contusion which had evidently been made by some heavy, blunt instrument striking her on the back just between the hips.

“That bruise has caused a temporary paralysis of her hind legs,” mused the doctor, as he scrutinised the affected parts; “and I believe that there is an abcess hidden under that thick fur. If so it very likely presses upon the back-bone and causes the poor animal terrible pain whenever she tries to move. Well, here goes!” finished the surgeon, as he dexterously performed the operation in accordance with his diagnosis. The expected beneficial results followed.

“With the hair cut away, and a clean start with all pressure removed,” further elucidated the doctor as he swiftly worked, “the old girl will have nothing to do but lick the wound and growl at her pups when they walk on it. There! She is all right now and will soon be awake and trying to bite us. Let’s leave her.”

“All right, Doc; I’ll see you out of these woods and home. But I’m coming back to the dogs and spend the night. You see my blankets are here and plenty of firewood for a comfortable sleep.”

“Very well, Kid. Don’t blame you for wishing to see them through. That is one of the finest Blue Danes I ever saw in this north country, but she’s big enough to eat you, and they are all as

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cross as wildcats when they have pups. Where did you get her anyway?"

As they stumbled down the trail in the dim lantern light The Kid told the story of finding the dogs. When they got back to Golden City he persuaded a friend to watch the black-jack game and loading up with provisions he again returned to the cave. The great bitch growled, then whined when he spoke to her, and finally succeeded in standing up. She was a formidable object in the lantern light, but when The Kid held out a small piece of cooked meat to her she was able to stalk stiffly and somewhat suspiciously toward him. She ate the morsel from his hand. He fed her several more bits and then picked up the pail and went for water. When he returned the dog was lying down again and did not try to get up to drink, but lolled her huge head over the edge of the trough and lapped the water lazily and luxuriously, as though she thought she had a perfect right to be waited upon. The Kid laughed.

"There, you lazy mammy! I suppose you think that just because you've had a couple of twins and been operated on by a doctor you have to be waited upon the rest of your life. Next thing you'll be wanting to vote or something. Now go to sleep."

The Kid piled some more wood on his kind-

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ling and when he had a good fire going he took out his deck of cards and started the inevitable game. As he played he glanced from time to time at the sleeping dogs. The pups had wedged their stuffed little bodies against their mother's warm belly and were sound asleep. But The Kid noticed that every time he made any sudden noise with the cards the old dog would open at least one eye and steadily watch him. If he spoke to her she would confidently thump her great tail.

So there they dozed, The Kid and his dogs, both products of men's lust for gold, and destined to form a defensive and offensive alliance that was to make men of the north marvel for years and years.

CHAPTER III

THE Reverend Buchanan Taylor of Vine Street, Toledo, was a pious old man. Though he was no longer the active leader of a flock that made up a regular church organization, he did lead, and in quite an active way, another flock; that is, he led them and guided them when they had money to invest. His reputation as a clergyman, (for those of the dear public in whom he selected to confide, had it from his own lips that he had had a splendid record as a parson) of course, fitted him perfectly to advise persons with money where to invest that money. Certainly!

So the Reverend Pious Taylor had quite a following; and he saw to it that they knew that he went to church twice on Sunday and contributed generously to the collection plate and to other funds. Also, the Reverend Taylor had a son named after himself. This son, who was to his familiars known as "Buck," ran the bucket-shop end of his father's brokerage office. He was a big, sleek, loudly dressed young man with a smooth, oily voice and as shrewd an eye for real money as there was in Toledo. He was

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at first glance a fine looking chap, but a more careful study of his face revealed a weak mouth and hard acquisitive, black eyes set too near together.

"But many a better man had looked three times as bad as Buck Taylor and gotten away with it," or so the Old Country janitor had asserted to the elevator girl on one occasion when they were discussing the inmates of their office building.

"Indeed, he is a fine looking feller," she agreed, "and he slips me a dollar now and then, too, which is more than them Bible Society people do, or them lawyers either. And for that matter, that bank downstairs, which has private offices upstairs, give me fifty cents last Christmas, the stingies, and them with all that money, too!"

"Such is life, me colleen," nodded the janitor. "Them that has, gits,—and—most always—keeps! The day to you!" And he went whistling upon his way.

As the old fellow had observed, "them that has, gets," and so likewise did Buchanan Taylor, Jr. He made a strong impression upon his father's lady clients, and those who had not invested heavily in securities of Buck's selection did not have "it" to invest. They believed in him and he believed in himself. To make cer-

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tain of not giving one hundred per cent bad advice he would invariably hedge, and place at least one half the money intrusted to him in gilt-edged securities; then bucketing his customers' orders he would speculate with the balance. He often actually made considerable money and paid the lucky winners their profits, if he thought by so doing he could string them along and land them later with some stocks with a rake-off larger than usual for the broker.

He prided himself upon his shrewdness. It is to be doubted if he ever gave a thought to business ethics, except as they presented themselves from day to day as necessary. His code was: "if you can get away with it, it is good."

Buck liked to be liked. It was good business. For reasons of his own he did not talk much about his past. After eight or ten respectable years in Toledo no one dreamed that the pious Dr. Taylor and his son had ever been "requested" to move out of a mining camp for a crooked deal, nor did they question the authenticity of his titles of Doctor, or Reverend.

The reader may, or may not, recognize the same Buck Taylor who, as a boy in Goldfield, had whipped and then been whipped, by The Kid.

A transcription of an interview between father and son will give a general idea of how their

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questionable livings were made. They were in their spacious downtown offices.

"Well, Buchanan," observed the older man impressively, "I suppose you have that spiritualistic turn well rehearsed by now, eh?"

"Sure thing, dad," replied the son. "I've got two of the slickest fakirs in the business and a plant rigged up that would fool Conan Doyle himself. We will begin to lead the lambs to the slaughter just as soon as I can get the stock certificates lithographed."

"What is the property going to be called?" asked the senior.

"The Miracle Mine. It was discovered through a medium and a revelation to an old prospector. One of my fakirs is the prospector and he can talk mines and mining till the cows come home! It's a great plant, eh, Governor?"

The Rev. Taylor laughed.

"Well, boy, go to it!" he said. "Only don't get involved in any more lawsuits, or do anything raw. Whatever you do always disclaim responsibility when a woman insists upon writing you a check, and take the position before your clients that you *don't* advise them to go in. You simply let them see your peculiar sources of information, and they can take them for what they are worth. That's the game, ain't it?"

"That's the game, Governor!" agreed Buck.

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“But in the meantime I’ll have the stage set to make my evidence look as good as possible. We have a couple of old maids coming tonight. They are very ‘psychic,’ so I’m tipped off, and have got the kale to indulge their gift. It’s a cinch for ten thousand shares at one dollar per!”

“That’s good,” said the old broker; “but what do you know about the mine? Ever seen it or get any inside information that looks reliable?”

“I know it has got rock on it, and they found some rich float. That’s all I *know*. But this old rascal of a prospector states that he dreamed that there is a big lead on the ground that’ll run a hundred ounces to the ton, and I’m getting so interested in interesting other people that I am beginning to believe the dream myself!”

“Tut, boy, tut!” warned the father. “That ambitious desire to beat your own game is what breaks gamblers and puts solitaire fiends in the madhouse. We will be perfectly satisfied with the profit we make selling the stock without venturing to guess about the gold actually in the mine. Our clients have the money and the desire to speculate and they look to us to find them an opportunity. Our duty stops there. We find the mine; they do the speculating. We get a commission; they get the excitement and the profits,—if there are any. That’s the message, my boy! That’s the message! Quien sabe?”

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"I savy all right, Governor, but believe you me, as the chorus ladies say, I'd like to hit on a regular bonanza of a mine and make some of those squealers a lot of money. Then again if I didn't have to hedge on so much of this stuff, we'd have a cool million profit in a year."

"That's all very nice," quoth the pious broker; "but as pleasant as it would be to make other people a lot of money, it is also gratifying to know that we give them much happiness in the opportunity to speculate in stocks, and that knowledge repays me, and should repay you in great measure, for the work you do and the risk —ahem—you run."

"Say, dad, cut the comedy!" sneered the son impatiently. "C-a-s-h, Cash, is the only thing that pays. You and I know it. But I'll play the game along these lines for a while anyway. We'll work the spiritualistic stunt while the going is smooth and then switch to something else. So long! The market will open in a minute." And Buck departed to attend the business of the day.

In the meantime there was quite a flutter of excitement in a cosy little white fronted house situated upon one of the old residential streets of Toledo. And excitement was rare indeed in that particular abode, since the Misses Green were the proprietors. They had inherited with

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a modest fortune very modest and prim ideas of everything from bonnets to tomcats. Their clothes were painfully proper. When they discovered that their staid old tabby cat had deceitfully hidden from them a perfectly illegitimate litter of the cunningest little maltese kittens, their horror and interest knew no bounds. They tried their very best to guard the disgraceful secret of their cat's immorality from the neighbors and would have been successful were it not for the fact that kittens, like babies, insist upon growing large and active and running about where the world is sure to see them.

But the foregoing was a dark bit of history of the faded past, when the flutter above mentioned disturbed their maidenly breasts. This was something quite different. It seems that the ouija board and other psychic mysteries had long been of daily interest to the Green sisters. Ouija had repeatedly advised them wisely appertaining to their little investments of surplus income beside other important matters. They had wonderful results from table-tippings and tappings, and now "an awfully nice man, a banker or something," had invited them to a private séance as his especial guests.

"It is, dear ladies," the note ran, "your opinion and advice as to the probable genuineness and value of the promised demonstration that I

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would like to have. Your spirituality and psychic sensitiveness are far better known among your amateur contemporaries than you are perhaps aware. It is I, rather than your respected selves, that will gain both pleasure and intellectual profit from the meeting tonight. You can rest assured that I will do everything possible to keep your visit a secret. You may, or may not, tell of your experiences to others as you may see fit. I trust that you will bear in mind, however, that I am well aware that but very few humans now living are as susceptible to genuine communications from the spirit world as you and your chaste sister, and that you will immediately detect the presence of harmful spirits. If, therefore, the atmosphere during the séance, does not seem pure and comprehensive bear with me until the medium awakes, and perhaps we can then get at the cause of any psychic disturbance, if one there happens to be. At any rate, dear ladies, I bespeak your patience with one who can only sign himself an amateur far inferior to yourself in psychical research, and await your decision with unbecoming impatience. Respectfully yours, Buchanan Taylor, Jr."

Such had been the latter part of a note received only that morning and which had set the Green "girls" all of a tremble.

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"Of course we will help the poor man out," Elizabeth had decided. "He is such a nice looking fellow and has such a friendly expression."

"Of course we will, dear Bessie," had agreed the other. "He and Mrs. Towney always do get wonderful results from the ouija board together. He does not know that we have already heard of his medium and her control. There is no doubt of their genuineness, and we could hardly refuse to go to his séance held especially for our opinion."

"Surely not, my dear," agreed Elizabeth, and maidenly curls bobbed coyly as the two spinsters agitatedly made ready for the evening's adventure.

Buck Taylor had laid his plans well. It was a pure accident that he had met the Green sisters at Mrs. Towney's. Noticing their interest in the ouija board he had faked some messages and had performed quite successfully with the weak and pretty matron as a partner. Being an opportunist he had blarneyed the sisters and then pumped his hostess, and learned of their affluence and hobby. Further guarded inquiries from others resulted in Buck's plan to get up a special séance for them. He also arranged to see that they were predisposed in favor of the medium and her collaborator. This was done

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by a little shrewd social propaganda in which the medium was well spoken of in the hearing of the impressionable Greens. It took Buck hardly a week to prepare the ground for the expected harvest.

The medium was a highly successful professional, quite new to Toledo. Her assistant was an oldish man who had been in his day a famous prestidigitator; and he had also been a hypnotist, a mind reader, a contortionist and hand-cuff king. Incidentally too he had been a prospector and gambler. He was familiar with the parlance of mining and mining camps, as he was of race horses and race tracks. He kept the closest of tabs upon mining shares, new strikes and race track dope. Both he and the woman he worked with had had long stage careers and were as well equipped and as quick-witted a pair of fakirs as ever offered their wares to a gullible public.

Buck was drawn to Klondyke Kedy, as the old fakir was called, the first time that the latter gentleman wandered modestly into Buck's board-room. There was something smooth, slick and shifty about Klondyke that appealed to the youth's imagination. Kedy put up a three-point margin and bought himself ten thousand bushels of wheat. Before the close it moved up a point, and Kedy unhesitatingly sold out and

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collected his hundred dollars profit, less the commission. He guessed the market right on every movement during the following week, and though making but small bets, he collected regularly. He and Buck got acquainted and talked mining, horses, then spiritualism. One crook soon opens up to another. Kedy explained how to take advantage of mediumistic advice on stocks with psychic customers. The young broker grasped the situation at a glance and was not long in erecting the fabric that we have seen for the netting of the Green sisters.

Madame Response, the name chosen by the medium for her Toledo debut, had succeeded in getting a fairly complete history of the past life and habits of the Greens; also a surprising amount of data concerning their deceased relatives and friends. An adept at this sort of work, the Madame had her facts and figures so marshalled that far keener minds than those of the sisters would have been stupified, and I fear embarrassed, when the bones of an old closeted skeleton began to rattle and expose its ugliness to the eyes of the world.

Sometimes the Madame would go into a trance, and sometimes Klondyke would act as the window through which certain mischievous inmates of the other world would try to "kid" the loosely fabricated mentalities of this plane.

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It depended upon what kind of "josh" the come-ons appeared to want. Kedy could snap his toe joints, or for that matter, any joint in his body, so that they sounded like table-tappings. He added to his sleight-of-hand agility the art of ventriloquism. One of his cutest tricks was to have a visitor write a question upon prepared paper, which had been handed out by Madame; Kedy in the meantime would be in a sort of semi-trance. He would then take the paper listlessly and let his hands fall in his lap. In a minute or so he would lay the paper face up under a dull light hanging over the table, about which all would be sitting.

"The spirit will reply," he would then declaim in a hollow voice, pointing a long finger at the paper.

To the amazement of the credulous an answer would slowly appear, a letter at a time, just below the question, and yet no pencil or hand would be visible while the words were being formed. Then before the startled audience would have time to reflect, a tired voice, seeming to come from an empty chair, would ask, "Is that correct?"

If the questioner replied in the affirmative the voice would say, "Thank you." Whereupon Madame Response would request some other patron, or stool-pigeon, to ask a question and

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thus repeat the performance several times. If the answer happened to be entirely wrong, the spirit would say in a piteous voice, "It's no wonder; I am terribly confused and tired. Oh, so tired! Please forgive me and let me go."

It was all intensely appealing and impressive, and the swindlers invariably got away with it. Kedy would write the obvious answer to the question, or one that was capable of several interpretations, with a special chemical "ink" while he held the paper in his lap. The words that he wrote would be invisible, or would not develop under a red light, but when the lights were unostentatiously switched to white rays the letters would appear in the order written and seem to be inscribed by an invisible hand. The ventriloquist's art of making the spirit speak from an empty chair over in a corner of the room was the finishing touch and very effective.

This is the explanation of the inside workings of only one of the many skilfully manipulated hoaxes perpetrated upon the patrons of Madame Response and Klondyke Kedy. They were well equipped to loan their services and plant to Buchanan Taylor, Jr. for the furtherance of his plans and the aggrandizement of their joint bank accounts.

At the appointed time a taxi called for the Green sisters. A ten minute ride brought them

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to the house of the medium. This house was built of brick and was placed well back from the street. It was in darkness except that a weird blue crescent of a moon seemed to hang in mid-air over the front steps. Without a word and without waiting for his pay the taxi driver whirled away the instant the ladies alighted. They were left standing quite alone under the spell of the mysterious blue moon. Then they plucked up courage and approached the door. It opened before they had time to ring, and apparently of its own volition. It closed behind them as they stepped inside.

A turbined Hindu servant seemed to materialize from nowhere and salaamed them towards a room at the right. Buck Taylor, with warning finger on his lips, greeted them with a smile and waved them to chairs surrounding a black cloth-covered table. He sat down beside them. There they waited in utter silence for fifteen minutes. Then the Hindu shadowed in and whispered impressively, "Madame has gone unexpectedly into a trance. Monsieur Kedy regrets the delay exceedingly. He will appear shortly and speak with you."

The Hindu vanished as silently as he had come. There was another long portentious wait. Then suddenly Kedy, gowned and capped like an Oxford don, emerged from a murky

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corner of the apartment. The sisters jumped, their nerves nearly at the snapping point.

"Madame Response," he explained without further greeting, "is in a remarkable trance. Her aura is quite visible to me and will be to any of you who are psychically sensitive. She seems to be undergoing some kind of mental struggle with her control. Under ordinary circumstances I would have to ask you to go away and come at a later time. I feel that it is almost an intrusion upon the spiritual privacy of Madame to allow any one to see her." He paused.

Buck rose to the occasion. "We will go of course. But this does not look just right to me. I am frankly skeptical." He got up as though to go.

The ladies rose also but very, very reluctantly.

Monsieur Kedy stretched out a restraining and hospitable hand.

"Wait. Stay. The ladies have come, and Madame would not have them disappointed. You, sir, also, if you wish. You shall see Madame for a few moments. She is in a psychic condition such as I, her best friend, have never seen before. Look!"

Even Buck was startled. The two sisters caught their breath sharply; then half standing, they clutched the table edge and stared. One side of the room rolled back. In a bluish light

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in the space extending beyond stood a white hospital stretcher on wheels. On this stretcher lay a sheet covered figure, deathly still. Only a chalky face was exposed. The hair was enveloped in a small white turban. Kedy led his guests to within six feet of the couch. They noticed a faint flickering zone of violet light outlining the still figure under the sheet. After a tense moment the blue lips began to move. The face worked as though in pain; then disapproval; then disgust.

“No, no!” the lips said.

The Hindu servant slipped up from nowhere at a sign from Kedy and began to write.

“It’s dross!” the lips again protested. “It is dangerous. That is not what we mortals wish to know!”

There was quite a pause during which the face ran the whole gamut of emotional expressions. Then the lips moved again.

“Go away! Let me sleep! Please—go—away!” The last in a piteous pleading voice.

Then there was another pause during which the head was moved impatiently from side to side.

“I don’t wish to say it. The - world - ought - not - to - know. It is rubbish - dross - dirt - this gold. Miracle, you say? A miracle? Oh, a Miracle Mine? No! No! They ought not

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know. Let it stay there!" Here the voice trailed off and ended with, "Gold, Gold! Even Miracle gold is the root of all evil. Go away!" The lips were quiet. The face gradually calmed and the breathing became regular. The figure apparently was sleeping normally.

Signing to his audience Kedy led them quietly to their previous seats. The wall noiselessly replaced itself.

"I am sorry that there did not seem to be anything of importance, friends," he apologized, when he was interrupted by Buck, who was sitting with a well simulated expression of surprise upon his handsome face.

"It may be more important than you think," he blurted out, and then caught himself as though he had said too much.

"We do not quite understand her message yet, but will undoubtedly be able to interpret it later," remarked one of the sisters breathlessly.

"Very well. There is no doubt but that she was having a terrible soul struggle. Personally I was utterly unable to get a word of sense out of it." Then he signed to the servant, who handed him a tablet upon which he had written the words of the medium. He tore off the sheet and gave it to the sisters.

Buck, impatient, almost snatched it out of

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their hands and began to study the characters avidly.

"Miracle! Miracle Mine!" he muttered.

"Ah, here is the Madame now," announced Kedy, as that personage glided majestically into the room.

"I am sorry to disappoint you, dear people," she spoke in a sweet voice. "But I am afraid that I will be unable to hold a séance for you tonight. I seem to have been ill, or asleep, or lost, or something. I—Oh, my dear!" she gasped, and reaching blindly towards Elizabeth Green for support, she allowed herself to be assisted to a seat by that highly complimented lady.

"I feel your sensitiveness," she then whispered. "You are both so highly psychic and sympathetic!"

Elizabeth looked knowingly at her sister and then protectingly at her new friend.

"There, there, dear," she coaxed, "it is all right. We don't want you to do anything for us tonight. You just rest. So!" And she slipped a sisterly arm about the tired medium's shoulders, while the other sister fluttered about and patted and comforted.

"They tell me, Monsieur Kedy," here broke in Buck's matter-of-fact voice, "that you too have a spirit control and do some rather remarkable things. Could you demonstrate for us?"

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“Sir, I am not as psychic as Madame, and my control seldom finds in me the proper vehicle for his messages. But while in a western mining camp I lived for many months with a Hindu savant who, in return for information I gave him about our western world, taught me the power of projecting thoughts in the form of color and light, and subjective mind reflection, or mind reading, as it is more often called. I sometimes combine the two by allowing a guest to project his thoughts upon the screen of my mind, which I then in turn project as colored pictures, or words on a suitable screen or wall. Let us try. But please remember that I am neither conscious of the results of these experiments nor can I interpret their meaning. It is for you to do that.”

The party arranged themselves around the table while Kedy squatted, Hindu fashion, among some rugs and cushions in a near corner and began fondling a great hooka, or water-pipe that reposed upon the floor at his elbow. At this juncture a big black cat got up, and stretched itself lazily, from among the cushions.

“Unclean thing,” hissed Kedy. “Singa, take that tom-cat out of this room,” he ordered the servant.

Singa gathered the cat up in his arms and disappeared.

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“Now, ladies, you first,” Kedy suggested, and immediately appeared to go into a trance.

His eyes glazed and after a moment he slowly pointed to a space over a curtained window just behind the nervous sisters. They turned, and there, in smoking and colored characters, moving, but perfectly legible, read these embarrassing word,—

“Illegitimate offspring.” And that is all.

“Oh, oh!” gasped the astonished sisters.

Slowly the letters faded and disappeared. Kedy came out of his trance.

“Did anything happen of consequence?” he asked.

“Oh, nothing. No, sir, nothing of consequence,” the sisters assured him hastily.

“Monsieur, your control is vulgar to say the least,” giggled Madame.

Buck looked as though he little understood these references.

Madame in the meantime was nervously twiddling her fingers and while so doing dropped upon the table with some clatter a heavy gold ring upon which was mounted a small nugget.

“Now, for you, sir,” and Kedy again detached his mind from his brain. In a second he pointed again, this time to the ceiling over the heads of the watchers.

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The word "Miracle" danced above them in smoking and colored letters. It hopped about in uncanny fashion and then disappeared and was replaced by the words, "Miracle Mine," "Gold is dross," and other quotations from the Madame's late trance.

"Wonderful!" breathed the sisters.

"Whew!" ejaculated Buck, loosening his collar with his forefinger.

The words faded and Kedy jumped up.

"Was it anything? Did anything of interest happen?" he asked eagerly.

"Well, rather," drawled Buck, and then they all joined in a mutual admiration party.

The two mediums, pleading fatigue, finally begged to be excused, and dismissed their guests. As Buck and his two lady friends drove home in Buck's car he was purposely silent. When pressed by the excited dames he admitted that he was in a position where he could make a million dollars or so, if he was convinced of the genuineness of the demonstration that night. Finally he allowed himself to succumb to their superior knowledge of psychic phenomena and became convinced. Not only that, but there *was* a Miracle Mine that he had been considering putting some money into, and now he knew that it would be safe. Just before he left the Green's home that night, he consented to accept a trifle

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of a check for twenty thousand dollars, to be used in buying stock in the Miracle Mine, if any stock was to be found loose in the market. He was to send the certificates to the Misses Green as soon as obtainable.

CHAPTER IV

“**T**HAT unexpected trance was very clever,” Buck was saying to Klondyke Kedy a few days later (when he had called, in fact, to hand the spirit manipulator five hundred dollars in cash as payment for services rendered). “And I figured that a string of small colored electric lamps hidden under the sheet could have produced that aura effect, but how-inhel did you put those smoky looking letters up on the wall at such opportune times?”

“That’s easy, Bo,” laughed Kedy. “I got a regular miniature stereoptican outfit in that big hookah, or water pipe, and I had the little slides prepared beforehand. When you folks turned your backs to look where I pointed, all I had to do was to press a button in the mouth-piece and then point it at the wall or ceiling. The light shines through the colored letter openings on the slide, and the smoking effect I get by a little secret of my own which is simple and new, but aint patented, so I wont tell you about that. It’s pretty effective for advertising mining stocks, don’t you think?”

“It surely is,” agreed the young broker, grinning; “and even to me it seemed wonderful

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how you got the Madame to drop the ring with the gold nugget on the table, which made us all think of gold mines. It was very effective, the way you flashed, in words of fire, our thoughts about the Miracle Mine on the dark wall. But springing that tomcat on those Green girls was the limit! I pretty near passed away in a suppressed convulsion!"

"It was funny," smiled Kedy. "The Madame dug up the story of the unexpected family of kittens and figured that those two prim little ladies would never in the world believe their neighbors would hear of the scandal, or if they did, tell of it. She thought the cat would furnish the suggestion, and the portentous words of fire would clinch the argument and convince the women that my act was clairvoyance."

"It worked all right. They would believe anything after that. Well, so long. Don't get drunk on all that money. By-by!" And Buck went laughing down the steps absolutely and entirely free of any sense of wrong-doing.

Instead of stepping into the waiting car he told the driver to go home as he preferred to walk. It was a fine brisk fall afternoon, and the bright sunshine, the modishly dressed people and his own feeling of well-being and affluence made him unusually light-hearted. He decided to drop in on a beautiful young lady friend for a

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cup of tea, so turned and strode off in the direction of her father's stately abode.

Doris Sherman was a perfect type of diminutive blond. Her eyes were so dark a blue that from a few feet away they looked black. She was slightly below medium height. Her daintiness and perfection of detail made her look much more frail than she really was. She rather played up to the impression that she gave of frailty,—when in city society; but those few unfortunate and lackadaisical swains who had been entertained by the little lady at her father's mountain camp, learned that she could out-walk, out-climb, out-ride, out-swim and out-game any mere city man who might venture to accept her challenge for a day's "outing." She was as deceiving in her daintiness as a Mary Pickford or a Jeanne d'Arc. Also, one might misconstrue the workings of her apparently conventional but busy brain. She really loved the big things of life and often fretted over confining conventions. She found social duties irksome, but played her part because, like her father, she was a game sport and tried to do what was expected of her without much complaint. At nineteen she was distinctly sophisticated in the ways of her small world, but with a refreshingly original point of view about the world in general; that is to say, in spite of having been brought up in an at-

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mosphere which from its very nature and refinement was narrow to a degree, she saw beyond her artificial horizon and let her mind wonder at, and her thoughts wander to, other and broader fields.

When the maid announced Mr. Taylor, Doris was decidedly pleased. Her two gossips, debutantes like their hostess, smiled at each other knowingly, and even perhaps a little wistfully.

“Doris has so much of everything,” one sighed a bit ambiguously.

“Yes, the sweet thing,—but—Oh, well, he is not the kind I would angle for even though he is good looking and in the banking business.”

Their undertones were interrupted by the return of Doris, who had risen and gone nearly to the door to meet her guest.

“Oh, girls,” she gurgled, “isn’t he the bravest thing to dare stop in and have tea!” Then to Buck, “It is so hard to convince you men that you see us at our very best when we are serving tea in the afternoon. Don’t they girls?”

The girls hardly had time to giggle their assent when friend Buck took charge of the conversation. He complimented all present by telling them that he knew he would find beautiful women calling upon Doris, as she was so charming herself that no one but extremely attractive ladies would dare risk comparisons.

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might be odious,—and some more of the same. Then he spoke of spiritualism, and they were further interested. He admitted that he was a dilettante, and lightly mentioned his late experiences with “two charming bachelor girls.” He made some allusions also to the Miracle Mine and hinted at the fact that he had discovered, “quite by accident,” there was a good chance of the property being worth “a pile of money.”

After the expected “Oh’s” and “Ah’s” the two visitors tactfully left and did just what Buck surmised they would do, namely, talk spiritualism in the several places at which they stopped; and they always mentioned the Miracle Mine as part of the story.

“And it is such an appropriate name for a mine discovered by a spirit,” declared one enthusiastically, while another exclaimed,—

“The whereabouts of a gold mine made known through a revelation? Is it not wonderful?”
etc., etc.

Thus the game went on and the story spread and spread until Miracle Mine stock was at a premium. The very nature and source of the story made the stock irresistible to the class of people that never had to work for a living. Buck and his pious father fed them the stock judicious-

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ly through obscure channels and a little at a time.

To return to the drawing-room of the beautiful Doris, if such would not be an intrusion, there was Buck suing right manfully for the hand of his fair vis-a-vis.

“You had better accept me,” he was urging. “There is no time like the present. Why insist upon making me wait?”

Doris was standing and holding her would-be lover at arms’ length, and shaking her head protestingly.

“No, Buchanan, you have got to wait, or marry some one else. I do not love you, but I like you well enough to tell you that I might love you if I—if you—if—Oh, dear, I cannot explain,” she cried, turning away from him.

“What is it, dear?” Buck pleaded. “Perhaps I can explain something if you will give me a lead.”

“No, no, it is just that you don’t seem to satisfy my mind. There is something about you that does not ring true,—that discords with me. Oh, can’t you understand?”

Buck was silent and hurt. Finally he turned away, a growing resentment urging him to say something cutting. It never occurred to him that it was a lack within his own make-up that

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was distasteful to Doris. He simply felt that she was unreasonably obtuse and undiscerning as to his desirability.

“Oh, well, girlie,” he sighed, “I’ll not give up hope for a while yet. You will get more sense as you grow older!”

“Indeed!” snapped Doris. “Well, if you insist upon quarrelling, please go away.” And she rang the bell for a maid to remove the cups and bring back fresh tea for another batch of “tea-snifters,” as her paternal parent disdainfully called them.

Buck took the hint and walked home distinctly out of sorts.

As for Doris she felt that she had a very strong string upon Buck, and though she intended to play it out, for the good of his soul and her own convenience, she had no intention whatsoever of letting go. Buchanan Taylor was a decidedly eligible young man. He was good looking, as has been stated, and had some standing as a young broker. His pious and dignified sire was looked upon as a guarantee of respectability.

Where Doris had not made up her mind to marry him, she certainly intended to hold the mandate,—no pun intended,—for him, and at the same time extend, or at least maintain, her sphere of influence to take in several other young

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men, any one of whom might prove to be suitable and also desirable for future annexation. She had the usual and excusable egotism of a beautiful, young, and wealthy girl, and she played her social role with neither more nor less design than was to be expected. Perforce she was a bit of a snob, but she did have a strong sense of justice and refrained from leading men along without telling them, quite too frankly sometimes, their shortcomings. The girl did not yet realize that her startling beauty might very well drive a youth raving crazy, in spite of all her protestations, if she led him too far before applying the brakes.

When her father came home that night she told him of the spiritualists and the Miracle Mine. He at first rather pooh-poohed the idea, and the conversation drifted to other channels. Within a few days, however, he heard of the Miracle Mine from various unexpected sources. Then a newspaper paragraph told of the spiritualists, Mme. Response and Klondyke Kedy, having had some sort of a joint tip from the other world to buy Miracle Mine stock and that they had done so in large lots. (Buck Taylor had been working the publicity stunt for all it was worth.)

Finally one evening at the house Mr. Sherman

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became interested in hearing Buck tell about the mine, and though the youth most wholeheartedly explained that he knew it was a sheer gamble, the next day the elder man bought a block of stock through his private brokers that made even Buck and his seasoned father gasp.

“Why, say, dad,” protested Buck, “I didn’t want Mr. Sherman in this thing! I’ll look fine in Doris’ eyes when we lay down the cards and reach for the pot. It will queer me with her. We better get him out with a bit of a profit while the going is good.”

“Oh, forget it!” snapped Taylor, Sr. “The money is what we want. Sherman has lots of it. Also the world is full of women.”

“The world isn’t full of women like Doris though, Governor,” snarled Buck. “And I like money as well as you do, but I’d give more to get Doris than to tie up her dad’s money in some cat-and-dog mining shares.”

“Well, get her for all me, son,” replied the father coldly, “but don’t ask me to pay for it. The Miracle Mine project is a wonder all right so far, but you must not let your personal lusts interfere with the firm’s profits. Get me?”

“Gov., you’re a tough old man, with about as much heart as a rattler,” complained Buck bitterly.

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The Governor permitted himself a yellow-toothed grin.

"My son, our lady clients do not agree with you," he declaimed. "If they did you would very likely be pushing an ore car or shoveling muck in a mine instead of strutting around with a good education and good clothes. As for me being tough, as long as no one but you knows it, why it is O.K. I won't tell on you and you,—why, you reciprocate. And as to heart, you can again thank your stars that I do not have too much,—not enough, at least, to miss any chances to make money, or to give away what I do make."

Buck gave up the argument for the time being, but wondered why it was that Mr. Sherman bought Miracle stock after he had been told by the prime mover himself that it was a "sheer gamble."

"It must be the pyschology of selling," he mused, as he slumped down in a chair in his own private office. "That is what the Gov. is always preaching about. He says that the way to sell a bum stock to a cautious or wise guy is to slip him the story and then warn him that if he bought he would very likely lose all he put up, but that if it should happen to be good he'd make a pile of money. I didn't realize that I

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was hooking Dad Sherman, but he sure bit and bit hard. If the whole thing wasn't such a raw fake we might sink a shaft on the property and run a drift or two, and perhaps a cross-cut and make it look like we believed the gold was there and that we were hunting for it. But it is hopeless, I guess. I'll have to get old Sherman to unload on someone else beside father. The Gov. would slaughter me if he thought that I got Sherman to unload on to him. Damn!" he finished aloud. Then he sat still and puzzled and smoked, with Doris' piquant but disdainful face before his mental eyes. "If the damn mine was any good I might do something," he pondered.

Suddenly he sat up straight, then sprang up and began to pace the room.

"By gosh!" he exclaimed, "The darn prospect might be some good. No one has done any work on it to find out. I'll go to Porcupine the first opportunity and look her over."

"When are you going?" asked a sweet voice behind him.

He jumped and turning beheld Doris Sherman. She had walked through from the waiting room unannounced, the doors being open and the office boy at lunch.

"Don't look so scared," she giggled. "I won't eat you. A couple of friends of mine wish to

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buy some of the Miracle stock, and I came to see about it for them."

"You did?" inquired Buck, his equilibrium hardly recovered sufficiently to permit him common politeness. "Sit down, please, Miss Doris. The fact is I would rather not see women get into these mining propositions," he lied quick-wittedly, trying to save himself from a further complication in which Doris might blame him for losses sustained by her friends.

Doris' eyes opened wide. "But you took the order for the stock from the Green girls," she averred. "Why not this from my friends?"

Buck started. "How did you hear that?" he demanded as nonchalantly as possible.

"Why, Mrs. Towney was calling and showed them where the paper reported that those two spiritualists had bought a lot of Miracle Mine stock. Then they told her that you had gotten hold of some stock for them, and she told me. Then some friends of mine heard of it through some other channel and spoke to me and finally I offered to ask you to get some stock for them, and you will, won't you, please?" She ended archly with a smile that no mere man could resist.

"Lord, yes," Buck gave in, as most men would have done. "You are so darned attractive—"

"That will do, please, Mr. Buck Taylor,"

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laughed Doris, stepping close to him and looking for an instant into his eyes, and then—handing him a formal order for the stock, just as he thought to get something more personal and even touching, if one may dare the word.

He took the paper while she seemed to “shimmey” out of his reach; then suddenly, all dignity, she bowed her adieu and disappeared through the door. Buck swore, then looked at the paper.

“Buy ten thousand shares Miracle at market price for our account and deliver stock at Sterling Trust Co., where cash will be forthcoming.

Signed.

Lucia Porter

Mary N. Black.”

“Whew!” whistled the young broker, as he turned to the telephone. “I am in for it now. When this bubble bursts I’m done for with her.”

But he had the order executed.

That the reader may have some idea just what profit the Taylor firm was making out of these stock orders for Miracle Mine, (and this was quite a common occurrence in the early promotions of the Porcupine gold district), they had paid the original locator one thousand dollars in cash for his claim,—without looking at it.

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Incorporation of Company.	\$ 750.00
Purchase price of claim as previously stated	1,000.00
The cost of stock certificates .	250.00
Fee of Registrar and transfer agents	50.00
Other disbursements	250.00
<hr/>	
Making the total cost to the firm ..	\$2,300.00

There were one million shares of a par "value" of one dollar per share. These they sold through dummy brokers at one dollar per share. They gave the broker who acted as seller a small commission for accommodating them and acting as a blind for the fact that all stock sold came directly from the Taylors, and these latter received at least ninety cents per share clear profit. The semi-sophisticated reader might wonder how the Taylors could legally get possession of the stock of a limited company without paying par for it. The process is quite simple.

"In consideration of \$1.00 well and truly in hand paid to Deedem Nuthen (Taylor's lawyer) by the Miracle M. Co. Ltd. and other valuable consideration as hereinafter set forth; namely \$1,000,000.00 in common stock of the Miracle Mining Co. at par, the said Deedum Nuthen hereby deeds, grants, sells, sets over, conveys

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and assigns all right, title and interest in said mining claim, or claims in Blank Township, numbered on the plan of Porcupine Gold district as follows, etc. etc. to have and to hold—and will forever defend, etc."

Such was the wording of the contract of transfer. How easy! In other words, for a mining claim that cost \$2,300.00 the Miracle Mining Co. Limited, paid *all* its capital stock of \$1,000,-000.00, and by a stroke of the pen the stock became automatically "fully paid and non-assessable," and the sole property of the Taylors and the one or two legal dummies appointed by them as co-directors.

The people who bought the stock never even inquired if there was any stock in the treasury of the company, without which a company could not carry on development work, unless some philanthropist like the Taylors cared to "*advance*" the funds to pay for the work. If this happened of course the mining company would soon owe the lenders large sums of money, and they being perhaps unable to pay out of their earnings, said lenders would get judgment and seize the mine and freeze out all the original stock holders.

It was an old, old game with many variations, but perhaps reached the height of its popularity during the Porcupine boom.

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The name Miracle and the spiritualistic slant gave the Taylors a slight “edge” over their competitors and enabled them to act with greater boldness than most brokers would have dared to do, even though a mine mad public urged them on and fairly threw real money at their heads.

The situation in which Buck found himself by springtime was unique. Without advertising through the usual channels, without putting a salesman on the road, without listing the “security” on either the N.Y. or Boston curb or Toronto Mining Exchange, and without actually urging people to buy,—he, and perforce his pious sire, found themselves the possessors of but 550,000 shares of the Miracle Mine stock, having sold the rest to the confiding public who, when all else failed, were ready to believe in tips from spirits!

The elder Taylor was elated. The younger was, on the other hand, as nervous as a witch. He had long since made up his mind, against his father’s expressed wishes, to visit the Porcupine camp as soon as the snow was off the ground so that he could start some work. Buck did not wish to lose his chance with Doris. As her friends were largely interested he had to give some appearance of good faith in order to save his face.

CHAPTER V

KID Winfeld spent much time in the tiny cave with his newly found canine friends. And friends indeed they turned out to be. It was but a few days after the doctor had relieved the pain of the mother dog that she became entirely submissive to The Kid's advances. He watered and fed her regularly and soon coaxed her out of the cave to get her daily ration of food. The Kid realized that exercise would be her surest trail to normal health. He patted and cajoled her into action. There was only one familiarity that she would not stand for, and that was handling her pups. If her new master approached them she would stalk over and stand between him and them. If he tried to go around her she would move so that he could not. If he persisted she would show her great teeth in a most menacing growl. Her instinct for protecting her young was too strong to be overcome and she set up a barrier that was too formidable for The Kid to try to pass.

Standing fully three feet high at her shoulders with her great head towering as high as The Kid's chest, she looked just the part that the doctor had suggested.

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"She is big enough to eat you and as cross as a wildcat."

Her overbearing demeanor when shielding her puppies amused The Kid and made him all the more eager to overcome her prejudices.

"I'll play with these precious little sucking pigs of yours yet, you old crosspatch," he would laughingly tell her, and she would wag her tail in a shamefaced manner as though to be forgiven her weakness.

The days and weeks passed and Winfeld bided his time. The bitterly cold winter weather made it inadvisable to attempt to move the dogs from their snug cave, so the boy built a cosy log cabin on the shelf of rock, using the cave as a sort of connected back room. A chimney of stone and mortar passed up between the log roof and the stone roof of the cave. A big fire-place just below warmed both natural and artificial parts of the abode. He literally built a house around his dog family, and it was only a question of time until the expected happened.

As he lay upon his blankets before the fire one Sunday, when the pups were some two months old, two of the now fat and awkward youngsters came tumbling and playing in his direction. He kept perfectly still and they lumbered up and fell against his feet. He did not move and they finally came within reach of his hands. He

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ventured to pat one on the head. It immediately began to bite at his fingers. Wagging its little stump of a tail it growled and worried its new plaything in great delight. The old bitch was watching all this out of the corner of her eye. She rose slowly and stalking stiffly over to The Kid she picked up the offending pup by the scruff of the neck and with determined mien returned and deposited it, with an admonishing nip and growl, in its bed at the back end of the cave. Then she called the other to her and sent it scurrying to join its mates. She then deliberately stretched herself at full length on the floor between her master and her pups. All this was done with such an air of hurt dignity that The Kid was convulsed. Reproof fairly snapped from the big Dane's maternal eyes.

"All right, old girl! All right!" he jibbed. "You needn't be so cut up about it. Those babies of yours are going to gambol and sit up nights sometime, with some one besides a cross old lady like you for a companion. Better let 'em play with a square gambler than gambol on the green where the wolves will get 'em. Get me, old thing?" And as he talked to her she would wag her tail nervously as though in somewhat of a quandary as to what to do between her loved master and her equally adored pups. The young animals were getting too lively and curi-

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ous for the mother to manage. That very day she grew tired retrieving her offspring and warning the boy away, so toward night she lay quiet and watched all four of her precious babies receive caresses from him without protest. But he soon discovered another side to her nature. If he caressed any one pup with marked partiality she immediately walked over and took the pup away from him, and, none too gently, retired it to its corner.

“By heck!” swore The Kid amusedly, “the old girl is jealous!” And he was the more convinced of this streak in her character as time went on.

She simply would not stand for his making a favorite of any one of her pups. If he did she would amble over and stick her great head right up in his face and nearly smother him by lapping him with a tongue as big and strong as that of a cow. If this did not make him stop his ill-bred behavior she would growl menacingly and try to take the young dog away; in which case The Kid had to give in quickly, or she would bite it in two in her rough persistence. And he soon found that she would most cruelly take out her spite on the innocent little dogs by cuffing or nipping them until they howled in pain.

She always seemed to look with approval, however, upon his attempts to train the fluffy

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youngsters to fetch and carry, or to do other simple tricks. By March The Kid was driving the big dog hitched to a light sled, and she made easy work of pulling a hundred pounds of provisions from Golden City to the claim. Sometimes he would leave the pups locked safely in his cave-camp and keep the old dog with him in his rooms in the town, or at the mine where he kept time. His camp was so well hidden by the bush and in such an unusual place that he never worried about it being disturbed or even discovered by strangers. He rigged up a strong wooden latch on the door and taught Juno, as he had named the great Dane, to pull the rope and open the door from either side and close it again. She had a marvelous dog sense and, being quick as lightning at learning any tricks her master would attempt to teach her, she seemed to think that her pups should be as clever.

When he had some leather harness made for the pups and started in to teach them to work, Juno was in her element. She was an adept at getting into her own harness, if it happened to be anywhere near in order as it lay on the ground, and she expected her pups to learn all the tricks she knew in a day. If The Kid tried to gently admonish an irresponsible youngster for thinking more of chasing a squirrel than it did of pulling straight in the tiny traces, the old

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dog would try to help by pouncing on the recalcitrant one and nearly shaking the life out of it. She stalked beside, or ahead of, the floundering team with her hair bristling in rage at their stupidity, or in pride over their precociousness. Therefore The Kid's training had to be carried on most circumspectly, augmented as it was by the kindly meant and anxious, if overpoweringly strenuous, assistance of the mother dog.

"Say, you old fool!" he had panted, just after straightening out the awful tangle of harness occasioned by Juno's flying at the team of sulky pups, who had suddenly balked and squatted in the snow, refusing to either pull or move, "If you don't leave these babies alone I'll never get anywhere."

But the pups pulled like little Trojans all the way home. It was only then that he decided to get a whip. He had done his training up to this point by kindness entirely. When he appeared with the dog whip in his hand and started to hitch up his pups for some practice Juno never moved.

After the animals had gotten well away, she trotted behind with, what The Kid afterward declared to a chum to be, a joyful grin on her face. When the pups finally decided to play instead of work she stood quietly by while the master cracked the whip loudly in the air and touched

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it gently to the fury young bodies. They of course howled, in pain and misery, for the protection of their mother, at this unheard of treatment, but none was forthcoming. She watched the chastisement with wagging tail and a most approving air. When the pups found that their hard master demanded their obedience, and their harder hearted mother would neither protect them, nor veto his demands, they decided that work was the better part of a hard life and threw themselves with eager little yelps and whines into their job.

On several occasions, after Juno had watched her master soundly thrash the rapidly growing puppies, to enforce decent behaviour, she decided that their welfare and bringing up could be safely left in his hands, and from then on seldom interfered.

Before the snow went he traced the old dog ahead and strung the four pups out behind, and in this formation soon taught the gangling youngsters to follow a leader and pull a sled. Then he tried Juno on the sled and the four pups ahead with the largest, a black and white female named Pinto, in the lead. He had good results this way. It was laughable to see the old dog discipline the young ones and keep them to their work.

“The trouble is,” laughed The Kid to an old

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dog driver who had been interested in the training of the young team, "Juno would chase those little chaps to death. She is harder on them than I would ever think of being, and they are scared to pieces that she will get close enough to bite 'em, so they pull their poor legs pretty nearly off."

"Well, don't let her drive 'em too much, son," the old dog man had warned. "A good sled dog will drive, and for that matter, train inexperienced dogs faster and better than a man could possibly do it. But she might discourage them pups so bad that they'd never be no good. She might break their little hearts."

It was about this time that The Kid taught Juno to carry a pack upon her back. He made a pack-saddle for her very similar to those that he had seen western prospectors use with burros. It was remarkable with what facility and willingness she carried a small burden. He knew enough about dogs not to attempt to put a heavy pack upon her back, but she would take thirty or forty pounds without balking. While Juno protested most strongly against owning allegiance to any but her newest master, and while her ferocious appearance and enormous size effectually discouraged advances from strangers, yet if The Kid introduced her to any one as his friend and spoke his name several times, she

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would go from him to the friend at command. The introductions The Kid gave were few but most amusing to watch. He would perhaps be talking with a comrade, the dog covertly watching him the while; then laying his hand on the friend's arm, he would call the dog to him and placing the other hand upon her great head, he would say, "Juno, this is my pal, Jo White (or Jim Browne, or whatever the name might be). Shake hands with him."

The big dog, sometimes with reluctance, would raise one of her fore-paws and condescendingly allow her new acquaintance to shake hands and would receive his greetings with proper dignity. Then The Kid would ask for his pal's handkerchief, or mitten or cap, and hold it out to the dog to smell. He would then toss it away and tell the dog to "fetch Jo White's hat." When Juno brought it to him he would say, "Take it to Jo White!"

The dog would obey. He would repeat this performance with many variations until the intelligent animal had so associated the sound "Jo White" with the scent "Jo White," that they seemed connected. And strangest of all she would remember,—within certain limits; for instance, until she learned to know a man from his continued association with her master, it was uncertain as to whether she would go to the right

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one. But if The Kid had an article belonging to that individual, no matter how small, he could give it to the animal and tell her to take it to Jo White. Juno would be off like a streak and deliver the goods to Jo White and to no one else. What is more, she would take a letter or other article back to her master,—and woe betide the man or beast that tried to stop her!

As can readily be understood he and his dogs were well known characters in Porcupine. He had just about gotten over his fear that some claimant of the old bitch might turn up, when that is just what happened.

It was Saturday night and a crowd of miners and prospectors were enjoying the refreshments and pool tables of King's Pavilion, talking of the latest strike and generally disporting themselves man-fashion. The Kid wandered in for a few moments to chat with the boys. His black-jack game would not start until ten o'clock. Juno of course was at his heels, while her pups had been locked up in a shed back of his rooms.

“Py gar!” exclaimed a rough and gutteral voice. “Dars mine old dog. Here you!” The voice addressed itself to the crowd and to the animal. “Ya, dat’s him. Aint she a peauty? Komme hier, you pig stiff, and take deinen schlagen!”

The Kid turned and looked with surprise,

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first at the cringing dog who was showing every fang in her head, and then at the speaker. His quick glance took in a character, locally known as "Dutchy" Messer, who stood some six feet above his larrigans, and exuded what in western parlance is known as "meanness" from his bristly pompadoured yellow hair to his big feet. His eyes were those of a crafty old boar; his shoulders, sloping, but tremendously heavy, and his hairy hands were, the Kid thought, the largest he had ever seen. Dressed in his mackinaw shirt and baggy trousers he seemed to take up more space than any three men in the room.

The Kid admonished Juno to stop her snarling and in so doing attracted attention to himself as owner of the dog.

"Say, poy!" roared Dutchy to The Kid, advancing menacingly. "Whatcher doin' wit my hund, eh?"

The latter sat unmoved in his chair and addressed an idle remark to a bystander just as though no such person as Dutchy existed in the whole wide world. Nor did he move until the big miner was almost shouting in his face and actually threatening him with violence.

"Say, pard," he then drawled, "are you trying to whisper me a secret, or sing me to sleep? If you can't talk English, and talk it quiet, why

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beat it and pick on some one else. My little dog might bite you if you persist."

The crowd laughed.

"Your dog!" roared Dutchy. "What in hel you sayin'? It's mine and I'll have her! She's lost this seven, eight monts!" And he started to step around the cool and immovable Kid to get hold of Juno, who was crouching and growling a few feet behind her master's chair.

"Don't you try to touch that dog," he warned in a low voice. "She'll kill you!"

"Ho!" exclaimed Dutchy, but pausing nevertheless. "Kill me? She's mine, I say. She aint kill noppody!"

"She'll bite you though, you big frankfooter, if I tell her to. What right have you to claim her?"

Dutchy turned white at this insult.

"Py damn!" he breathed. "Poy, you is triflin' wit Dutchy Messer!" Here he pounded his chest in rage and shouted, "Dot's mine, dat hund! And I'll haff heem,—me! Geter Hell outen de vay!" And he made as though to strike The Kid out of his path.

There were some surprising results. First, the boy was not where he had been when Dutchy started to swing; second, Dutchy received a stinging wallop on the nose from an unseen hand; third, something heavy struck him in the chest

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and bowled him over. When he came to he found himself lying upon his back and a great dog was standing upon his chest, glaring red-eyed into his face.

“Leaf me hup, Dragon,” he commanded, but not daring to move.

At the long unheard name Juno curled her lips and snarled wickedly. She did not let the big bully rise. Finally a voice said quietly:

“Here Juno!” And she removed herself with apparent doubt as to the wisdom of this command.

She stalked over to The Kid. He placed a hand on her collar. The expectant crowd made a circle about the principals and watched Dutchy lumber to his feet,—unhurt in body but sore as a boil in his self-esteem.

“Py Gott,” he swore, “I’ll git yer fer this! You giff up my dog hund, or I’ll lay a complaint!” He mixed English with German in a most ludicrous fashion as he edged toward his late adversaries.

The Kid realized that if Juno had belonged to Dutchy there was a modicum of justice in his demands.

“You keep back, mister,” he warned, “and I’ll talk business. But don’t you try any more of that rough stuff or Juno and I will beat you to death! Keep away!”

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"I'll not hurt yer, but giff me forty dollars fer mine hund," demanded Dutchy.

"You have got to prove that you own her first. Who is there here that knows whether or not this big piece of Dutch cheese ever owned a dog in his life?"

Two or three voices spoke up.

"It useter to be his bitch," said one. "I seen him with one awful like her," affirmed another.

"Well, why didn't he look after her then?" insisted The Kid.

"I was up north," declared Dutchy.

"That's right," agreed others.

"What did you leave the dog for?" demanded The Kid. "I found her crippled and dying in a den way back in the woods. I got a doctor for her and fed and nursed her back to health and trained the pups. Who pays me for that?"

"What's yer pill?" inquired Dutchy, beginning to look uncomfortable.

"Forty dollars," said The Kid with a smile.

"This is damp robberies!" sputtered Dutchy.

The crowd was enjoying the contest hugely.

"My bill is more than that," laughed The Kid, "but if you behave I'll not force you to pay it,—maybe."

The big miner was non-plussed. Swearing softly and scratching his head he turned towards

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the door without further hostilities, unheeding the jeers of the onlookers.

When he had gone the crowd turned again to its various pastimes. Several chatted with The Kid and casually warned him that Dutchy was a vindictive rascal who had a bad record. The boy made up his mind to watch out, though he did not feel that he was in a position where he would be particularly vulnerable to the man's attacks. He learned that it was Dutchy himself who had, in a drunken rage, tried to kill Juno, who was at the time heavy with pups, because she had refused duty when he attempted to drive her.

Upon hearing this piece of gossip, The Kid remarked, "I thought that hombre had something the matter with him besides ignorance. He must be just naturally mean!"

As the snow left the ground, The Kid took every opportunity to prospect upon his claim. He had not felt that there was much chance of finding ore upon the surface, but was rather sensibly inclined to the belief that, owing to its proximity to other ground, which was daily being opened up and showing good values in gold, it was only a question of time when some one of the larger interests would want his claim more than he did. His surface investigation had hardly been more than perfunctory up to the time when he had found the dogs. As spring

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came on he caught the miners' usual vernal malady, and armed with pick and shovel he had gone to work trenching, but without much result until one memorable Sunday early in May.

The snow still lay deep in the shady places among the ledges on The Kid's ridge. He had dug several short trenches following the footwall of the ledge down into the muskeg as far as the water would permit him to go. In the last trench he had encountered a broken formation comprised of schist with streaks and veinlets of quartz running through it. He had picked out some of this crumbled rock and shovelled it to one side as worthless.

On the Sunday above mentioned he was giving the now well grown pups a few lessons in retrieving and incidentally self-restraint. He would toss a stone or stick and then command a certain pup by name to "go fetch!" at the same time making the other pups sit still until their turn came. After considerable drill of this sort he had thrown a stone over towards one of the prospect holes. It struck the pile of debris on the edge and had bounded with a splash into the water at the lower end of the trench. The willing puppy had unhesitatingly flopped right into the water-hole after it, and ducking its head had picked up the stone (or another piece somewhat similar), and full of righteousness and

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water had rushed back to its master and laid the piece of rock at the latter's feet.

Patting the wet pup for his willingness he laughingly picked up the cleanly washed rock. As he did so his eye was intrigued by a glitter of metal. On closer scrutiny he discovered several "sights," or particles of gold sticking in the tiny quartz seams with which the matrix of schists was interlaced.

"Well!" exclaimed the lad. "Who would ever expect to see a color in that stuff?"

The pups all wagged their tails most knowingly as though this was no surprise to them. He hurried over to the prospect hole and washed off other pieces of the same kind of rock and found several more "colors." Then he put a rough and random sample of the entire pile in a gunny sack and calling his dogs started back for town. He stopped at his rooms just long enough to lock the dogs up in the shed, and then hurried over to an assay office run by two youngsters lately graduated from McGill University. He knew that they were new to the camp and having made but few acquaintances would not be likely to say anything about the results of the test of his samples.

Monday afternoon he received their report. They had run six assays, and the samples had

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rendered gold at the rate of thirty-one dollars and fifty cents per ton!

"If I can only find the vein," the Kid thought to himself. He resolved to spend some of his savings by hiring a few discreet old miners to do some more work. So he arranged to give up his job of time-keeper and boss his own "mine."

He kept the black-jack game going each night however and derived enough income from that to pay for his additional prospecting. It took but a few days work to open up a strong and well mineralized quartz vein. Assays of this ran steadily better as the little shaft was slowly sunk. He noticed with growing interest that tiny tentacles of quartz shot off into both walls and enriched the country rock for some feet from the main, or mother vein.

"That stuff is well mineralized, son," remarked one of the grizzly old western "single-jackers," whom The Kid had picked out to work for him. "And it enriches that there country rock till it would all make a good sized belt for crushing. Why, it must be all of six or eight feet wide, and if it runs anything at all, she's a world-beater!"

"Well, Jock, keep drilling," smiled his boss. "My cash isn't all gone yet. So-long," and the young claim owner walked off whistling.

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"Say, Jock," whispered the other old miner who had been mucking out what his partner had been drilling and blasting, "do yer s'pose The Kid knows what he's gut, eh?"

"You know who his dad were, doncher?" was the disdainful reminder.

"Sure. George Winfeld of Goldfield, the greatest gambler and the best camp the world ever seen!"

"Yes, sure," the other agreed impatiently. "Wouldn't a son of George Winfeld know a mine when he seen one? Sure he would. Git down here and twist. We'll double-jack this hole. It's more company." And the two efficient old gossips twisted and struck the keen drill steel until a couple of cunningly placed holes some four feet deep were ready for the dynamite.

As the distant whistle on the new Dome Mill blew for noon old Jock touched off the fuse and climbed up out of the shallow shaft as yet hardly ten feet deep. He walked away with slow deliberation.

Boom! The two charges went off simultaneously. The old miners quietly opened their dinner-pails and fell to munching their lunch.

Not so unconcerned was The Kid. As soon as the smoke had cleared he ran over to his little shaft and leaped down. He was gone so long

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that his two miners were nearly through their dinners when his face appeared above the windlass. He sauntered over to the old fellows and addressed them thus, "Boys, how much do I owe you?"

The men were dumfounded.

"Why, say, Kid, aint we done satisfactory work?" inquired Jock, a hurt look in his old eyes.

"Sure, fine; but I'm quitting and so are you. How much?"

Old Jock was a Welshman and also mighty quick-witted. He made no further protest, but figured on his fingers the amount coming to himself and partner.

"It's fifty-five dollars." The other shook his head mournfully in the affirmative.

The Kid pulled a roll of bills out of his pocket.

"Well, boys, here's fifty apiece, instead of fifty-five for the two of you, and if you get broke come and see me. I only ask you to say nothing to any one about my claim or the work you've done here. Is it a bargain?"

"Sure," said the two delighted old fellows, taking the money with hearty thanks.

Then Jock's partner got to his feet and started towards the shaft,—obviously to see the result of their last blast.

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"Here, you!" ordered Jock. "Didn't you understand the boss here when he said you was done,—through,—fired,—eh?"

"Yes, but—but—I," stammered the other, as he turned confusedly.

"But me none of them buts, Sandy," quoth Jock. "Git yer pail and hit the trail with me back to Golden City. What yer aint seen in the bottom of that shaft wont excite yer none and yer wont talk about. Take a tumble, mon, take a tumble! So-long, Kid. See yer some time," and the wise old Jock led the innocent old Sandy down the trail to Golden City.

If Sandy could have seen his late employer furiously shovelling muck into the shaft a few minutes later he would have wondered. And if he could have seen what The Kid had seen in the bottom of that shaft he would have marveled.

For The Kid had struck it rich! Too rich, indeed, to leave uncovered. So he shoveled several feet of mud and rocks on to the glittering pile of quartz and then tore up the rough windlass from its position over the shaft. He spent most of the afternoon carrying all his mining paraphernalia to his cabin and storing it away. With his knapsack laden with spectacular gold samples he returned to Golden City followed by his entire dog family.

CHAPTER VI.

THAT night the excited youth had just had time to feed his dogs and himself and to store his gold samples in a safe place when some of his patrons drifted in. They liked to come and talk with The Kid before the play started. Many that did not play would drop in for the same reason. He attracted the better class of men. Being absolutely taciturn about himself and his own interests, he showed a most ready appreciation of those of others. He had a youthful ingenuousness coupled with a quick comprehension of men's affairs, and he was always quiet and polite unless imposed upon. The few times that some undiscerning bully had tried to start trouble things had always ended in the same satisfactory manner; i.e., satisfactory for The Kid's patrons and friends. The said trouble maker would find himself asked in the quietest and most courteous manner possible to leave the premises, if he was displeased with the hospitality extended to him. If he did not tumble to the situation pronto, as the westerners present expressed it, he would find himself looking into a face as hard as iron and eyes that were two mere pin-points of menacing blue fire.

“Get out!” would be the command that fol-

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lowed. The words would fairly crackle in their imperiousness.

There was something about The Kid that impelled attention, and the crowd stood undivided in its moral allegiance to him, though it was never known to interfere. The undesirable person usually departed quickly and quietly.

But on two occasions the order to "Get Out!" had been completely ignored. The first time this had happened there had been a fight in which the undersized Kid had cut his burly guest quite to pieces with the skilful clean blows of a trained fighter. The second occasion was enhanced by the departing guest pulling a knife and making a playful slash at his host's windpipe. The Kid had jumped back in time. Though unharmed he had invoked aid from his dumb ally.

"Juno!" he had cried. "Grab him!"

From an obscure corner a great slate colored streak had leaped clear across the long table and in a thrice had borne the would-be knifer to the floor. The Kid had rushed in and wrenched the weapon from his hand and had called the dog off in the next second. The guest had then been glad to take the invitation to depart with entire seriousness.

These two experiences had been enough to convince all Porcupine that Kid Winfeld,

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though young, was a man among men and they liked his style.

Owing to the semi-private atmosphere of Winfeld's parties and the lack of strong drink there, the police busied themselves with other matters far more menacing to the public weal than the "little game" run so peacefully. The Kid knew better than to abuse his privileges and so requested his friends not to introduce new people to his room unless they were absolutely sure that they would not prove a troublesome element.

Hence he was annoyed when he discovered among the other guests a newcomer. He had not been made aware previously of his advent. And to make matters still more embarrassing the said new member was being introduced by another new member for whom The Kid had perhaps as little regard as anyone could have. His name was Blare. He was a successful wholesale bootlegger who had succeeded in keeping the finest brands of Scotch and ales always upon the tables of the mining magnates of Porcupine,—in spite of the Provincial police and the local officers. Now The Kid had no use for bootleggers, so he took his introduction to "my friend, Mr. Smith," from Blare with coolness and an eye to eventualities.

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Mr. Smith was "a smooth looking artist," as one of the habitués of the place remarked to his neighbor. The proprietor watched him covertly from the vantage point of a high stool. There was something vaguely familiar about his gestures and loud voice as he picked up his cards and joshed the banker. Finally he called for a drink. The Kid jumped down off his stool and asked him if he would have ginger ale or lager.

"Slops! Slops, man!" Mr. Smith sneered. "I want whiskey. The best you've got. I want it damn quick! I'm drier than a wooden god!"

"My friend," remarked The Kid quietly, "I do not keep any strong liquor in the house. I have a little ginger ale or lager on ice and shall be delighted to stand the drinks in either one. Which will you have?"

"O, well, young feller," scowled Mr. Smith, "trot out your soft stuff then, and don't stand there gaping at me. Hurry on now! Bring along some of that lager you're bragging about."

"I am not bragging about it, Mr. Smith. It's just ordinary lager beer. But you are welcome to it, such as it is."

There was a certain intangible something that had crept into The Kid's voice that made the players uneasy.

"Pass me, dealer," one had said.

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“Me, too, this time,” requested another.

All eyes were now centered upon the good looking stranger, so flippantly ordering their host about. The sophisticated ears were taking in the undertones rather than the words of the two speakers.

“Thank you! Thank you!” reiterated Mr. Smith. “Bring it right along. Here, you banker, I’m still in this.” Then turning again to The Kid, who was standing behind his chair, “*Thank you, I said. Didn’t yer hear me?*”

“Sure, I heard you, my friend, but I was just waiting to see who was going to win this lay,” replied The Kid coolly and making no move to go after the refreshments.

“Say, Kid, listern!” emphasized the other. “*What are you standing there for?*” He half rose from his seat. “I tell yer I’m dry, thirsty, parched. Per-leeze get a move on and rustle those drinks.” There was by now a nasty light in the stranger’s eye.

“Sit still, Bo,” drawled The Kid. “Here it comes. I have a fellow in reserve to serve sports like you.” As he said this an old cockney waiter, (who, having drifted into the camp had attached himself to The Kid’s establishment) placed before the guest a bottle of beer and a glass.

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"How much do I owe you?" demanded the somewhat mollified guest.

"Nothing, Mr. Smith," smiled The Kid.

"Oh, but I say!" expostulated the other. "I'm here to pay my way. How much is it?"

"Look, stranger," replied The Kid sharply, "The drinks, such as they are, are on me. This is my room. These folks are my guests. I don't sell drinks to anyone."

"O, pardon me," smirked Smith, "I thought that this was a gambling house."

"Well, you've got another think coming," retorted The Kid. "This is my private room and you, sir, are my guest and Blare's. What is more, it is perfectly safe to be introduced here under your own name; that is, if it is safe for you to own up to it anywhere."

"Who said I was afraid to acknowledge my own name?" demanded Mr. Smith furiously, jumping to his feet.

"Sit down, Mr. Buck Taylor," laughed The Kid easily. "No one here will give you away."

In confusion Buck Taylor, alias Mr. Smith, slumped down in his chair looking curiously the while at his tormentor.

"Where have I seen you before?" he asked weakly.

"In Goldfield, Nevada," supplied The Kid.

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Buck nodded his head slowly as the truth began to dawn upon him.

“The Kid—Kid Winfeld!”

“The same,” smiled young Winfeld bowing. “And now, gentlemen, as our friend, Mr. Taylor, has disclosed his identity, let the game proceed.”

Buck played a listless hand or two and then indicated to his friend, Blare, that it was time to go. They went out unnoticed by the other players.

Buck’s idea of coming into Porcupine under an assumed name was but the natural result of a crafty disposition. He wished to get a look around before disclosing himself. If his claim seemed impossible of development, he could make some plans for disposing of it without exposing himself to criticism. He had not yet arrived at a stage of villainy where he was usually afraid to travel under his own name. But The Kid’s forced disclosure of the fact that he was masquerading put him in a light far more suspicious than he really deserved. As he naturally could not explain he hated both the embarrassing way The Kid had bawled him out before the crowd and The Kid himself for doing it. Then the affair of their boyhood in Goldfield was unpleasant to remember and hard to forget. Buck, furthermore, had a sneaking

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feeling of The Kid's mental and physical superiority, and that made him hate him the more.

As he and his new acquaintance, Blare, walked to the ferry that was to convey them to South Porcupine and Buck's hotel, he apologised for sailing under false colors. Nothing that he could say, however, could really convince Blare,—himself a crook,—that the alias was only a matter of caution rather than necessity.

"I understand, old man," the latter had leered. "We've all been there."

"But it is of no consequence, I assure you," insisted Buck. "My only object in using the name of Smith was to keep from being annoyed by reporters."

"O, sure, I understand. You don't need to make any excuses to *me*. Hope the exposure will not crimp your game," agreed Blare affably, as the motor boat docked at the south end of the lake and they landed.

"I have no game, as you call it, to crimp," declared Buck hotly. "And I'll bid you good-night!"

"So long, old-timer," grinned the other. "It's all right with me. I'm mum."

Buck went to his hotel and upstairs to bed in a very bad humor. Instead of saying a good Christian prayer he first cursed The Kid round-

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ly for being in camp and then Blare for being a suspicious old fool.

The Porcupine district at this time was divided into three main camps, or towns. Golden City was a thriving collection of canvas, log, and board buildings at the north end of Porcupine Lake. Two miles away, at the south end of the lake, lay a fast growing community called South Porcupine. It was situated near the Big Dome Mine discovery. Some four miles farther on was the great Hollinger find. Surrounding it, lay the camp called Timmins. Mining claims, in all stages of development and promotion and devilment, were strung along for some miles on both sides of Porcupine Lake and its connecting chain of lakes.

The Kid's claim lay on the east side of the lake about a mile and a half from Golden City. The claim that had been purchased blindly from a prospector by the Taylors of Toledo, and branded as the Miracle Mine, adjoined part of The Kid's ground on the north.

As Buck made his headquarters in South Porcupine he would not be likely to run across The Kid unless the latter visited the South End, as the miners called South Porcupine.

Now it was not The Kid's intention to make a display of his samples of rich gold ore. He wished to avoid being pestered by every fly-by-

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night broker and promoter in the three camps. He was well aware that he could have dozens of propositions flung at his head for forming a company and capitalizing his claim for millions of dollars, and then be in a position for selling out to a confiding public. That scheme did not appeal to him at all. He believed that he had a good, honest prospect and that if it were shown at a propitious moment to the Dome interests, or some other of equal prominence, he could make a quick clean sale for cash. Hence he kept his find covered with muck, his gold samples hidden, and bided his time.

He and his dogs visited his claim nearly every day. It was his especial delight to go over Sunday morning and putter about with the animals. Between training them and prospecting here and there he put in some wonderful spring days. He had cleared away most of the under-brush by cautious burning and this, combined with the elevated and breezy situation of his rock and log cabin, gave him almost entire freedom from blackflies and mosquitoes,—the pests of the north.

His royalty from his black-jack game more than furnished a living for himself and dogs, so with the opening of spring he had quit his job as time-keeper. From his perch among the ledges he had, on several occasions seen in the

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distance parties visiting the surrounding claims, but he had seldom been disturbed. And for this he was thankful.

One Sunday in June, as he lay basking in the sun on the selfsame ledge where he had first heard Juno whine from her retreat, he was disturbed by a sharp bark from the old bitch, who had been rusticating in a sunny nook over near the shaft where The Kid's treasure had been discovered. He sat up to listen, and again heard Juno speak. It was not an ugly note. As The Kid listened he could hear what he took to be a boy's voice talking cajolingly to the dog. He lazily stood up and whistled her to him. To his surprise she did not obey, but barked again in a most insistent and friendly way. The Kid sauntered along the ledge to investigate. As he rounded a clump of bushes he saw below him his dog gently tugging at the short coat of a little girl and quite evidently trying to pull her towards the master. The little girl was talking to the big brute in a half frightened, half amused voice. She looked up in relief when The Kid appeared.

"Your dog is insisting that I pay you a visit," she called laughingly.

"Here, Juno!" commanded The Kid, running to her side. "She wont hurt you. Be still, you old fuss-budget," he thus addressed the great

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Blue Dane, who was by now wagging her tail and prancing about like a puppy, instead of behaving like the dignified parent of four youngsters nearly as large as herself.

"Look at her," laughed the newcomer. "She is so excited. You know she nearly dragged me off my feet trying to introduce us."

The Kid blushed. There was something about this "little girl" that made him nervous. The fly-net brimming her Stetson hat was tucked so closely around her face and neck that The Kid could catch but a suggestion of features through the mesh.

"I never saw her act that way before," he smiled. "She has taken a fancy to you I guess. She does not usually notice people unless they interfere with me or try to tease her or her pups."

"Well, I am glad somebody has," gurgled a sweet voice from the depths of the fly-net.

The Kid felt as though this "little girl" were laughing at him. Then she continued, "You know I was not exactly lost; that is, I knew that I was in Porcupine, Ontario, but I could not seem to find the trail back to the hotel."

"Have you been out long?"

"Since morning, and I am famished!"

"Hungry, eh? Well, say, kid, you are pretty small to be running round this muskeg country

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alone and without grub. Come right up to my shack and we'll eat. I was just going to put the kettle on," and leading the way up among the rocks to his cabin he invited his guest to a home-made chair (carved from a barrel) and went about his cooking in the efficient way of a trained old sourdough.

Juno lay prone in front of the visitor and every now and then cocked an eyebrow or flapped her tail approvingly as the latter spoke.

The Kid was so busy fanning his coals into a blaze for frying bacon and flapjacks, and boiling coffee, he had not noticed until all was nearly ready that his visitor had removed not only her fly-net but her hat. He had placed the viands upon two plates. As there was no table in camp, he requisitioned an empty dynamite box and placed it on end between them.

Then he glanced up at his guest and started, almost dropping the plate in his surprise. Before him, instead of a small girl, he saw a petite woman with dark violet eyes and golden hair. She had the daintiest of features: such an adorable mouth! And dimples,—dimples most strategically placed.

"Oh," said The Kid.

"Oh, yourself!" mocked the lady.

"I thought,—I didn't know—that is, I thought that you were a little girl," he stammered, set-

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ting down the plate upon the improvised table.

“Well sir, my father calls me his little girl—still,” she dimpled.

“Yes, but — —.” The Kid was quite overcome by the apparition so unexpectedly revealed.

“I may have some coffee, just the same, may I not, even if you are disappointed?” She held out a dainty hand as the tin cup was clumsily proffered by her host.

“Certainly, ma’am,” responded The Kid respectfully.

And here conversation lagged as both young people, being ravenously hungry, did justice to the meal. The Kid was not one to lose his mental equilibrium for long. His duty was quite clear: he must feed his guest and accompany her back to her hotel. That summed up his plans in so far as she was concerned.

The lady’s plans for her host were, unconsciously perhaps, of a much more complicated nature. She could not have dismissed them so easily if she would. This was a brand new experience and she could not but make the most of it.

“Do you live here all the time?” she asked, gazing about the cabin interestedly.

No, ma’am.”

“Where do you live?”

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“Over in Golden City, ma’am. I have a claim here, and keep this place just for convenience when I am doing assessment work or taking a holiday.”

“What is your regular work?”

The Kid was embarrassed. What was he anyhow?

“O, ma’am, I’m just a sort of mining man. Sometimes I work at other peoples’ mines and sometimes I work at my own.”

“I see.” The lady paused to sample a hot flapjack The Kid had slid upon her plate from the frying-pan.

“This is great!” she murmured, her mouth full. “Is there much gold around here?” she then asked. “Is your claim as good as the Miracle?”

“I don’t know the Miracle claim, ma’am,” replied The Kid. “But if it is as good as mine it is a dandy!”

“You know, I never have seen native gold. I’ve heard so much about it. I expected to see it sticking right out of the ground upon the Miracle claim. What does it look like? I know that a real miner like you could show me how it looks.”

The Kid was complimented. He hastened to take from their hiding-place several of the

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richest specimens ever seen in the north. The gold stuck like great clinkers out of the white quartz. Even a greenhorn would have been dazzled by the display.

“My soul!” breathed the excited girl. “Isn’t it heavy?”

The Kid let her “heft” and play with several of his spectacular samples and was most obliging about giving her an idea of their value. They talked together like two school children, The Kid never failing to call her “ma’am” in a most respectful manner.

“Don’t call me ‘ma’am’ in that way,” she finally complained. “I’m not twenty yet, and you make me feel as though I were at least thirty!”

“All right, ma’am,” laughed The Kid. “What shall I call you?”

“O, just call me Doris,” she giggled impetuously. “And what shall be your name?”

“Call me Kid,” complied our hero. “I have been known that-a-way since I was a yearling.”

Both laughed at their daring familiarity, but the way was thus opened for confidences. The Kid told her all about his dogs, and put the whole family through their repertoire of tricks for her edification.

“I have never seen that big bitch take to anyone before,” mused The Kid, as Doris fondled

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the great Dane's head now reposing in her lap, while the tail waved gracefully,—most approvingly, back and forth.

If Doris was shocked over the scientific epithet, she nevertheless sensed that the new environment meant new words, habits and so on.

"We have taken a liking to each other. It was perfectly killing the way she pushed and pulled me up here to see her master."

"I am not a bit sorry, Doris," murmured The Kid. "But I *am* sorry that it is getting late. If you wish to get home by sundown we had better hit the trail."

"My, it is late, isn't it?" exclaimed the girl, glancing at a jewelled wrist watch. Then archly looking up at her clean cut and youthful host she ventured, "Are you sorry that your dog introduced us? Have I taken up too much of your time?"

"Not at all!" The Kid hastened to assure her. "It has been a big day for me. You are just about the first woman I have spoken to in Porcupine. I hope this will not be our last meeting."

"O, can we not have another picnic soon? This has been wonderful."

"Surely. To-morrow, or any day. I'll be here for dinner all this week." The Kid could

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make plans quickly upon occasion.

“And would it be too much to ask you to let me have, as a keepsake, one tiny little bit of that stone with the gold in it?”

The Kid hurried away to the hiding-place and selected a beautiful sample. He pressed it into the pink palm of his fascinating visitor.

“Take it, but please do not tell where you got it,” he cautioned seriously.

“O, thank you,” the girl gurgled. “And there is certainly no fear of my telling where I got it. You know this visit is most delightfully improper.”

She saw that she had made a mistake. The Kid turned red to the roots of his curly hair.

“Pardon me, ma’am,” he stammered stiffly. “I— — had not looked at it in—that—light. Perhaps it would be better not to — —”

“O, stop!” cried Doris. “I was only jesting. We can meet when and where we like. But this freedom is new to me and it has gone to my silly head. Come on, Kid!” Here she looked most childish. “You take me home. I live at the hotel in South Porcupine.”

The Kid was mollified at once.

The two youngsters closed the door behind them and accompanied by all the dogs set out for the town,—after such a day as neither had ever experienced before. With expressions of

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mutual admiration they parted at the entrance of the hotel. The Kid's head was in the clouds as he and his canine family tumbled aboard the motor boat for Golden City.

"Juno, old girl, you have a lot of sense!" He thus complimented the old dog as he patted her goodnight.

That he was in love with a mysterious stranger who had appeared from nowhere seemed the most natural thing in the world. He dreamed of violet eyes and blond curls above a fairy-like and alluring figure that seemed upon the border-land of magnificent womanhood.

CHAPTER VII.

“**W**HERE in the world have you been?” Such was the greeting The Kid’s new friend received as she burst into the lobby of the King George Hotel, curls flying, eyes sparkling, and cheeks flaming like glorious poppies.

The fact that the small lobby was packed to overflowing with mining men and those that sold wares to them, deterred neither the loud-spoken and amply proportioned young matron who propounded the above question, nor the impetuosity of the young lady who answered it.

“Why, Mrs. Robson, I’ve been prospecting. See what I found!” And she thrust out, before the gaze of all, an astounding specimen of gold quartz.

“Oh, my dear! Where did you get it?” was all the matron had an opportunity to say.

In another instant Miss Doris was surrounded by pushing eager men whose natural chivalry hardly tempered their anxiety to be the first to touch the sample and get a tip as to what part of the district it had come from. To inquiries the girl just stated, “Oh, I just found it.” And that was the extent of the information she gave out.

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The proprietor and others knew that this young lady had only that morning arrived, and that her party had some interest in a so-called Miracle claim over near the Preston East Dome Mine, and that they had gone out that way almost as soon as their rooms in the hotel had been arranged for.

Doris Sherman, for the reader has long since guessed that The Kid's charming visitor was none other, had arranged to be chaperoned on a trip to Porcupine as soon as she had heard of Buck's departure. Mrs. Robson was the wife of one of the mine managers, and as it happened was leaving Toledo to join her husband. Trust Doris to find ways and means. Two words had convinced her father that his interests and hers were at stake. She had no suspicions of any deliberate fraud in the Miracle deal, but she wished to break the monotony of her conventional life by going north and seeing the mine in which her father had such a substantial share.

Upon their arrival, her chaperone and she, both liking to walk, had procured the services of a guide and had been shown out to the Miracle claim, which was designated on the plan only by its registered number. Doris had wandered a bit and finally lost herself amid the clumps of timber and cradle-hills. Then she had stum-

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bled upon The Kid's domain, with the results previously chronicled.

Her companions had spent some time searching for her and then had returned early in the afternoon to organize a search party. After some delay this party had been just about ready to set forth when the heroine of our tale burst in upon them.

“Glittering with good looks and gold nuggets,” as one correspondent wired to his Toronto paper.

Also, the name, Miracle Mine, the account of the “Lost Lady Prospector,” and “a gold discovery of unheard of richness” became so coupled together in newspaper reports that demands for Miracle stock became unprecedented in numbers. Finally old man Taylor, sitting so smug and religiously back in his comfortable office chair in Toledo, began to hear the rumors and to get stung with his own poison. Instead of selling more stock he stopped selling and craftily tried to buy some back, with more or less success.

Doris, in the meantime, told her chaperone but little of her real adventure and simply said that a mining man, seeing she was lost, had directed her to the hotel. Remembering what The Kid had told her she persisted in keeping her own counsel as to the origin of the nugget.

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Buck Taylor, alias Mr. Smith, had been quite unaware of Miss Sherman's intentions of going north. He was both pleased and dumfounded when he met her face to face in the dining-room. He joined her instantly and was introduced to both Mrs. and Mr. Robson under his real name. This necessitated an explanation as to his motives for appearing under an alias, and though he passed the matter off in the most jaunty manner possible, it left an uncomfortable impression in the mind of the straight thinking Mr. Robson. Doris' appearance upon the scene, as well as the incident at The Kid's card party, made further explanations necessary to the hotel people. Then Doris rather sought the protection of her chaperone, Buck thought, and he seemed to get no chance to see her alone. Altogether these things put him in a bad humor. He did not become aware, for some days, of the wild newspaper stories of the Miracle Mine. The trains into Porcupine were still more or less irregular and newspapers sometimes delayed. This made it easy for wonderful reports to reach civilization and go undisputed for days at a time.

The mining share-holders "arbitrage" this situation, or in other words, bought or sold on markets affected by rumors, and tried to clean up on each report before authentic news from

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the mines settled the market. Also, two days had passed before Doris showed Buck the gold quartz that had started the wonderful rumors about Miracle. Strange as it may seem he was for the moment more engrossed in devising some plan to get Doris out of camp before she found out what he already suspected than he was in trying to either inspect the sample or learn where she got it. This attitude of his,—this apparent indifference about her discovery,—piqued the young lady and made her more anxious to discuss the subject with him. In so doing she told more than she had really intended to.

A letter from Taylor, Sr. jarred Buck into realization of the possible importance of the source of his lady friend's specimen. He resolved to get at the bottom of the matter at once. Follows the letter:

“Toledo, June 3, 1911.

“Dear Son,—

The optimistic rumors which report the discovery upon the Miracle property of very rich ore have placed me in a quandary. The demands for Miracle stock are unprecedented. I do not know whether to sell while the demand is brisk, or to buy back as much as possible before the excite-

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ment makes the stock high and hard to get.
Kindly advise me by wire, etc.—

(Signed) B. T., Sr."

Buck immediately hunted up Doris with a view to questioning her. She, in the meantime, had met The Kid again by appointment, and the two had had another delightful picnic lunch together. They had played with the wonderful dogs, and the girl had asked an avalanche of questions about mining and prospecting methods. He had willingly shown her about his claim and had, after continual cajoling upon her part, intimated that the rich samples had come from one of his shafts. Upon being laughingly cornered by his enchantress, the youth at last admitted that they were at the moment standing upon the very dump of the treasure shaft. She had then teased him into rigging up the windlass with a bucket so the water could be bailed out.

As the weather had been unusually dry, but little water had run into the hole. A half hour of merry winding on the cranks had sufficed to uncover the muck, which The Kid had piled over his rich ore. Then both young people had clambored into the shallow shaft where but a few minutes digging exposed the gold. Piece after piece of the yellow metal laden quartz had the excited girl picked up only to cast it

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aside for a richer sample. She had hardly been willing to desist when her host pleaded the lateness of the hour. She begged to be allowed to keep another sample. The Kid, engrossed in covering up his treasure, absent-mindedly consented. As he dismantled the windlass and hid its appurtenances, he was much entertained by the rapid fire conversation of his companion.

So absorbed was he that he did not detect the glint of a pair of hard blue eyes, nor a broad be-whiskered face; neither did he hear the gutteral exclamation of surprise; all of which might have been located just behind a bush-fringed stump some twenty-five yards from the shaft and high up on the ridge. If the dogs had not been taking a siesta in the cabin after their hard romp with the young folks, the owner of the eyes would have been apprehended before he had been in the neighborhood more than a second.

The "Gott" that had sputtered from behind the stump had been induced by Doris' stopping for the hundredth time to dip into a tiny pool her new sample. At each cleansing the quartz looked whiter. The great clusters of gold shone more yellow and glittering. It was truly a beautiful and awe-inspiring specimen, especially so to a poor prospector who had lately been out of luck and badly whipped into the bargain. He had taken in the situation at a glance. He with-

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drew in as much haste as good order would permit, muttering to himself as he concocted who knows what Hunnish plans of acquisition and vengeance.

The Kid's head was again in a delightful whirl as he hurried Doris down the trail and towards South Porcupine with the bevy of big dogs frisking about in a manner most undignified considering their astounding size. The young people, as must be quite evident to the reader, had formed one of those unconventional and sudden friendships for each other far too uncommon in these days of social rigidity. The girl was not afraid to trust her instinctive liking for a clear-eyed, honest-faced boy; and the boy, far more sophisticated, allowed himself to be carried quite off his feet because let us say his dogs vouched for his guest's character.

It was just after her second adventure with her "miner," (which had been a deliberate avoidance of chaperonage) that Doris was accosted by Buck as she ran upstairs to prepare for supper. She tried to hide her muddy hands behind her as Buck stopped her on the landing.

"I have been looking for you everywhere," he complained, but smiled in spite of himself at the picture she made as she paused in her flight.

The look of frailness she partly assumed through deceptive costuming in the city was con-

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spicuous by its absence. Her cheeks were a stunning rose color; her wanton curls fairly extended their tendrils towards Buck's agitated heart; her carmen lips changed expression so rapidly that the bevy of dimples surrounding them worked overtime to dance in tune; and her eyes and flashing teeth just naturally drove Buck insane. Before she had time to answer his first complaint he burst out with a second.

"You are just too pretty to be loose!" he exclaimed, seizing one of her hands.

"Why, Mr. Taylor, you musn't do that—here!" And away she flew up the stairs.

Buck followed as far as her door, and after considerable coaxing through that hateful barrier, he made a date for supper.

The Robsons and Doris had connecting rooms, and though her chaperone was only normally inquisitive, Doris found it hard to explain her absence and her doings.

"I have been investigating a little for Papa (which was true) and some for myself (which was truer), and you know they'd never suspect a girl. I have discovered quite a lot and have found another piece of gold." She stopped breathless.

"Yes, dear, but — —"

"Well, here it is. It is prettier than the other, I think, don't you?"

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Mrs. Robson knew, from years of experience with her miner husband, fine gold samples when she saw them. This was startling.

"You must show that to Bob when he comes in!" she exclaimed. "Is it still a secret where you get these wonders?"

"Yes, but we will,—I mean, I will soon be able to explain," the girl stammered, controlling her tricky tongue.

"So there is a *we* in it, is there?" laughed the elder woman quickly.

Doris blushed.

"It is a very nice 'we,'" she confessed; "and 'it' is not yet to be introduced to the public."

"I see," arched Mrs. Robson. "But is this quite proper? You know this is a mining camp, and all sorts and conditions of men pop up in the glamour of gold and these brave looking mackinaw sport clothes. Remember my duty, please, and your father's good name."

"O, shush!" expostulated the young woman. "Trust me not to do anything to tarnish the family furniture or shake the family tree. This is going to be a real adventure, I tell you. Look at that gold!"

"Yes, my child, but the man and not the gold is worrying me. What can you tell me about him?"

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"Nothing, yet. He is a miner and young,— and sort of honest looking."

"You wouldn't say *good looking*, by chance, would you, dear?"

"No, not in the way we are familiar with the word, I should not," concurred Doris in so matter-of-fact a tone that her chaperone's fears were instantly allayed.

At her request Doris went on to describe her "miner."

"He is not very tall. He is slightly built. His eyes are blue like mine. His teeth are perfect. He smiles only once in a great while. He is young but I have no idea how old. His face looks terribly experienced. He is not used to associating with ladies; and he wears a wonderful diamond ring. And he loves dogs. There, that is all I know about him!" The girl paused triumphantly.

Her vis-a-vis veiled a worldly-wise and comprehending expression.

"Why, you have not been very observing, have you?" she remarked sweetly. "And how many times did you say that you had seen him?"

"Only twice; the day I was lost and to-day."

"He gave you those samples, you say?"

"I didn't say, did I?" replied Doris uncomfortably, and beginning to feel like a witness on the stand.

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"Perhaps not, dear," agreed Mrs. Robson. "But you must have found them somewhere."

"Yes, somewhere, but that for a time is to be my secret, if you will forgive me for being so uncommunicative." Then turning toward the cheap mirror that had to do duty in this mushroom town as my lady's pier glass, she exclaimed, "My, I am a sight! I must change these perfectly good knickers for a regular dress. Don't you find this water awfully hard? My hands are so grimy. I cannot get them clean." And with such patter Doris changed the subject and undressed. With deliberate malice aforeshortened she shook out her abundant golden tresses and rearranged the curly glory upon her queenly head. Mrs. Robson's hair was not her best feature, Doris had noted.

"O, my dear, what perfectly lovely hair!" she sighed enviously.

Doris felt repaid for having had to undergo the recent cross-examination. Then without malice and just because she was young and overflowing with vigor, she proceeded to perform a few graceful ballet steps which she followed by some impromptu callisthenics of a whirlwind rapidity and nymph-like grace. A cold plunge and a rough towel completed her exercises.

"You are such a strong and well developed little creature!" cried her chaperone in surprise.

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"You know I always thought you rather delicate."

"Well, I'm not," panted Doris, as she patted the last drops of cold water from her glowing body. Then putting on her silk stockings and small shoes she slipped into the two simple garments that go to make up the expensive summer wardrobe of the modern girl, and without more adornment demanded that her chaperone take her at once under her maternal care to the dining-room.

"I am ravenous!" she declared.

"Why so suddenly demand my protection?" laughed the elder woman. "And besides that stunning gown is not appropriate for a mining camp hotel. The men will try to eat you."

"O, I guess men here are like men at home," replied this diminutive queen of youth and beauty. "They will appreciate a pretty dress. Come on!" And she skipped out of her door and all but into the arms of the restless and lurking Buck Taylor, Jr.

"You are a dream!" was the unoriginal greeting of the completely vanquished young man holding the little lady at arms' length in juxtaposition to danger, Doris thought.

Shrugging his hands disdainfully from her shoulders, she glided away and headed for the

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stairs to the lobby. Buck cursed. Mrs. Robson heard him and laughed.

“Young man, touch not that ye be not touched!” she jibed warningly.

“I’m touched now, Mrs. Robson,” he admitted, his eyes shining and his face sullen with disappointment. “She is as illusive as a ghost.”

“Better *she* the ghost than you the goat,” this modern matron then slanged, a deep warning in her voice.

She liked this presentable and desirable youth and perhaps hated to see him singe his wings; or was she unconsciously envious of the ease with which her charge subdued men and at the same time kept them restless?

Doris took her place at the table a few moments ahead of her chaperone, and her admirer. A room full of good husky, sex-starved men, all most appreciative of her feminine allurements, did not jar her sensibilities in the least. During the entire meal not even one wanton or careless glance could have been detected resting for one fluttering second on a single male in the room. It were safe to assume that ninety per cent. of those males went out of their way to intercept such a chance shaft in case any were inadvertently let fly.

“Aint she a pippin?” husked Cliff Moir, the

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proprietor, to Casey, the romantic son of Erin, who edited the Porcupine *Daily Advance*.

“Diana in the flesh!” he breathed ecstatically. “And with a quiver full of arrows, she wouldn’t let even a teeny one fly this way! Ah me!” He heaved a profound sigh.

“Yes,” laughed Cliff, “a corral full of game and she wouldn’t take a shot!” Then mocking the blarney, Casey, he, too, sighed. “Ah, me!” And both laughed at their own foolishness.

“Where is yours?” essayed Cliff finally, with assumed indifference.

“Holding down her desk on the *Globe* in Toronto. And yours?”

“Waiting for me in Boston.”

They ate, as perforce men must, to live and to be worth waiting for. Then Cliff broke the silence as he prepared to leave the table.

“Hell, aint it, pal?”

“Yes,” agreed his companion. Then surreptitiously crossing himself he added with a dazzling Irish smile, “But shure I am ‘twill be Heaven when she’s mine.” And the two friends left the dining-room looking as happy as possible.

That was the way Doris affected everybody. Every man in the room seemed to be suddenly bequeathed with happiness over the mere advent of the beautiful girl from the middle west. As

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one man expressed it, “ ‘Twould make yer wanter dance every time she plays one of them little laffin’ tunes with her voice; and the smile of her is better than a picture show!”

Buck observed all these things with poor grace. He was selfish. His plans did not include any other men. He persuaded Doris to walk down to the boat landing with him. Later they were to meet some of the Robson’s friends.

The weather had been so exceedingly dry that Doris essayed the walk in her dainty slippers. Promising Mrs. Robson to be back in a minute she sauntered out with Buck and ran the gauntlet of prospectors and loungers, dogs, and canoe men that lined the rough trail answering for a street. They were unusually apparrelled for the north and attracted attention, so Buck led his lady away from the crowd to a tiny log wharf and finding a clean plank they sat down and gazed out over the placid waters of Porcupine Lake. As the thin and rose-colored twilight of the June day was gradually enriched by the violet purple of the gathering dusk, the man found it hard, amid such color and perfume and in such company, to discipline his mind to talk of gold rather than of desires of a more potent nature. Doris felt the spell and hearing a dog bark wondered if “her dogs” and “her miner” were looking at this same beautiful scene.

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“Say, Miss Doris,” Buck suddenly began, “where did you say you got those samples?”

“I didn’t say,” replied the girl sweetly.

By no amount of argument could he induce her to tell him anything whatsoever of her acquisition. He had lost his opportunity. She had before told him enough to have, at least, enlightened him as to her adventures. Had his mind then been intent upon what she was saying, instead of upon what he wanted her to say, he would have been able to wire his father some useful information. His efforts now to gleam anything of interest failed.

They walked back to the hotel and joined their friends,—she, gaily, teasingly; he, trying not to appear abused and disappointed.

CHAPTER VIII.

AFTER an hour of bridge in the cabin of one of the mine managers, under conditions which Buck thought unbearable, but which Doris thought most romantic, the nervous young broker pleaded business and went back along the dark, stump-infested trails to the hotel. Almost at the door he was accosted by a huge figure with a gutteral accent.

“Wie geht es, Mister?” rumbled the voice out of the dark.

There were Germans enough around Toledo to make this greeting quite intelligible to our friend, and though he was somewhat startled he replied, “Wie geht es yourself? And come on into the light where I can see who you are.”

He stepped out of the shadow and into the glare of the hotel door. The owner of the voice followed only so far as to enable Buck to identify him; then it spoke very good English.

“Say, Mister, I gut a story to speak. You listen!”

“Go ahead. I’m listening.”

“You seen dem gold samples dein Schätzchen haf, eh?”

“Schätzchen?” broke in Buck, annoyed. “No such luck. But what about ‘em?”

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"Me, I wus down py de dock. You vellers set py me and talk. She gif you de same rassel she give 'em all. But me, Dutchy, I haf the know about dem gold rocks. I see 'em!"

"See whom, if you please?" asked Buck quickly.

"See dein Schätzchen mit a bad feller: rekular dog teef. He was diggin' up dem nuggets!"

"Dog thief?" repeated Buck, only half taking in this jargon. "Where was he digging?"

"Ah! Dutchy don't do nuttings fur nuttings. One hunderd dollars und I show you on plan; two hunderd, und I show you on ground. Gut a gun?"

"Yes, but I don't know as I'll pay you to show me anything. I don't know you. Come into the hotel and we'll talk it over."

"Nein. No," declared Dutchy vehemently. "Meet yer termorer. Ten o'clock. Pete's place. Haf de moneys, or nuttings doing. Gute Nacht." And Dutchy melted into the darkness.

Buck went slowly into the hotel, puzzled over the peculiar offer. Everyone in the lobby was talking about Doris or gold nuggets, or guessing the whereabouts of the claim from which the nuggets came. He thought it as well not to contribute anything to these conversations. He was conscious of every one knowing of his sudden

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change of name from Smith to Taylor, and he disliked admitting that he was not the confidant of the charming young lady with whom he had been seen so much.

He did make some casual inquiries about a "big rough-neck," called Dutchy, and learned, not altogether to his relief, that that individual was a little too well known and not favorably thought of in the north. He left Doris to find her way home in company with the Robson's, and retired to his room resolved to look into Dutchy's proposition in the morning.

Buck found himself in a quandary so wrote his father:

"Dear Gov,—

The claim is well located, but owing to overburden is hard to prospect. The reported find is wonderful. I have my doubts if it is upon our ground. If it turns out to be from our claim, or has been found near our line,—*buy, don't sell*. If I find the whole thing a joke will wire you in time to unload, while I start to sink a shaft to keep the stock-holders interested. Doris Sherman is here. I wish a telegram would call her home.

Yours,
Buck."

This letter did not please the recipient thereof.

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“Damn! Nothing definite yet!” he exclaimed, tearing the note carefully into shreds. “I’m in a very awkward position. Very awkward.” He rang for his confidential stenographer.

“Take this letter, please,” he began.

“Dear Son,—

Your letter very obscure. I have the Green sisters and other spiritualists all lined up to buy Miracle stock to their limit, and will even margin some for them; also, old Sherman and many others. Can advance the price and still unload if mine no good. Now is the psychological time. Attitude may change. Get definite dope to me at once about the new strike that Doris is reported as finding.

Dad.”

This letter was written upon plain paper and signed only as above. It is easy to understand Mr. Taylor’s position. If the mine did not look good, he wished to sell out all the stock to any one that he could flim-flam into buying. If it seemed to be a bonanza, he would connive with Buck to keep the facts hidden long enough to acquire as much stock as possible. It is quite evident that both Taylors, senior and junior, were at one in their intentions regarding the Miracle stock,—with this exception: Taylor, Sr., intended to be entirely ruthless, while his son

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hoped, for very selfish reasons, to get Doris and her father out with no loss.

In the meantime Buck had met Dutchy at Pete's place, and not wishing to appear over anxious, and being by nature a sharp trader, he handed the big prospector one hundred dollars and received in return a print of a government plan upon which was marked by a cross the spot where Dutchy claimed he had seen Doris obtain the nuggets. Buck at once noticed that the cross was on the claim next to the Miracle, but some distance from the line. Betraying no particular interest he sauntered out of the bootlegger's joint with the plan in his pocket. It was several days before he found circumstances propitious for doing any investigating upon his own account. Not that he did not go and surreptitiously study the Miracle ground, but each time that he had approached the dividing line between his claim and the one marked upon the map, he had heard dogs. He remembered Dutchy's appellation of the owner of the adjoining claim as a "dog teef."

In the interim the letter from his father had been received and pocketed with a curse at the old gentleman's impatience. The next morning after the letter had arrived he had set out to make another attempt to see with his own eyes the place where the gold had come from. As he

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approached the line he heard no dogs. He made his way cautiously through the dry woods and came to the claim line blazed upon the trees. He stole forward until, across a tiny open muskeg swamp, he saw evidences of prospecting. With the aid of his plan and a pocket compass he located these trenches and small dumps as being the spot he was searching for.

As no one was in sight he stepped out into the open and went eagerly forward until he came to the ledges marked on the plan. It was then but the work of a moment to locate the shaft from Dutchy's description.

"The old Dutchman gave me the right steer," he soliloquised, as he climbed down the shaft.

It was quite dry. The unprecedented draught had permitted the sun to so bake the muskeg that no water had seeped into the hole, and the waste rock and earth that The Kid had thrown over the rich quartz was hardly an adequate covering for the treasure. In a few seconds Buck had uncovered rich ore. Taking his coat off to give more freedom to his arms, quite unused to such manual labor, he went to work with a will and soon beheld enough gold to make more sophisticated eyes than his pop out in a most lobster-like fashion.

At last, tired from his exertions and surfeited with the feel of these fascinating clinkers of yel-

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low gold and milky quartz, he gave an appraising and approving glance at the mineral-ladened, if less spectacular country rock and climbed out of the hole, barely bothering to toss a few handfuls of muck over the exposed treasure.

Buck had had enough training in mining ways and terms to realize the probable advantage of a heavy mineralized wall rock, and the whole find looked good enough to pronounce it the makings of a mine, rather than just a chance pocket. And speaking of pockets; our young friend had filled his with The Kid's gold. The weight of his plunder was so great that he disdained to put on his coat but carried it over his perspiring arm as he made his way in the hot noon sun back to his own claim and thence to South Porcupine and his hotel.

The fact that he had stolen several hundred dollars worth of somebody's gold bothered him not at all. Once in his room he unloaded the swag from his sagging pockets and wiping the perspiration from his pink and sunburnt face, he sat down to think. He had already come to the conclusion that though this remarkable discovery was adjacent, it was not near enough to the Miracle line to warrant the assurance of a continuation of values in that direction. There

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was only one thing to do: get possession of the claim containing the discovery.

He decided to buy the claim outright if he could. If not, there were other things that could be done to force the owner's hand, or hands, as the case might be. He could jump the ground and start a lawsuit claiming faulty title. He could run a new survey claiming faulty lines. He could do all manner of things with the help of a crooked lawyer to embarrass the owner, if he had to. This would lead to possible advantageous compromise.

"But first I must find out in whose name the ground now is," he mused to himself. So right after lunch he went to the recorder's office and found that the claim was registered in the name of K. E. Winfeld.

"Winfeld? Winfeld?" he repeated. "What Winfeld is that?" he asked the recorder.

"Why, you know. Kid Winfeld," he replied. "The young fellow with all those big dogs."

Then a light began to dawn upon our friend, and a scowl replaced the interested smile upon his red face.

"So he's the owner, is he?" he growled; then a thought coming to him, he asked quickly, "What do these initials stand for?"

"Blessed if I know," smiled the young official. "Some signs with initials and some with names.

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It's all the same to me. They aint my claims, Mister."

"I see. Well, good day," responded Buck, handing the man a five dollar bill. He hurried out to find a lawyer to his liking; that is, he wished to retain one that knew all the quirks and quibbles of the laws pertaining to mines and mining, and one not too conscientious.

Now while Buck Taylor was scheming and intriguing, The Kid and his new friend were quite unconventionally and surreptitiously getting better acquainted. Not one, but several meetings had taken place. They had hiked farther afield even than The Kid's rural dwelling. Equipped with a light knapsack, knickers and high laced boots, Doris in her Stetson hat looked quite the moving picture heroine. The Kid with his dogs made a body guard worthy of an Indian princess of the northern wilds. Armed with his prospector's pick, her escort kept the young lady intensely amused and even excited, as he chipped pieces from every exposed ledge that they happened to encounter.

Doris was the more interested in her new acquaintance because she did not understand him, for he was always revealing a new side to his character. The lunch time she liked the best. Then seated like a royal queen in a shady nook, with the great Danes sprawled about her, she

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would watch the deft wood-craft of her "pardner" and marvel at the easy speed with which he would build a fire and prepare an outdoor feast. She learned to like frying-pan bread and fried salt pork and coffee minus milk, when their prospecting and mutual character studies had so engrossed them that they had no time to use the .22 calibre pistol with which The Kid was teaching "Miss Doris" to shoot at small game.

She also marveled at The Kid's spasmodic target practise with the heavy automatic that he carried in a shoulder holster. The stunts he could do with that formidable side-arm would have made many a so-called expert look to his laurels. When questioned by his appreciative audience, he said simply, "O, I just do not like to forget anything that I have once learned,—that is all, ma'am."

Then he drew wonderful charcoal sketches upon smooth birch-bark, and outshone Doris herself at clever caricatures. She had studied both painting and drawing for some years. He knew something of music and was earnestly, if sketchily, appreciative of Beethoven, Wagner and Bach. Always modest and painfully aware of his limitations, it was only by the most artful leading upon the part of his fair guest that The Kid was induced to talk of himself.

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"What I cannot understand, Pardner," complained Doris laughingly one day as they prepared to eat, "is why you always carry a new deck of cards about."

"I suppose I do it for just the same reason that you chew gum," he replied, a light of humor in his serious blue eyes.

Doris blushed and removed the offending "cud" from its pink and dimpled receptacle. She knew her "pardner" well enough by now to sense that he had intended no offense.

"I see," she returned demurely. "It's sort of a nervous habit, is it not?"

"No—o, not exactly. You see— — I— I — just like the feeling of them, and I like to do tricks with them. That's all, I guess."

"Perhaps it is like the gun," she assisted kindly; "you do not like to lose your skill." Doris had made an unthinking shot in the dark.

The Kid looked up quickly to catch her expression. Had some one been talking? Her face was mischievous and might mean anything. Gambler that he was by nature, he controlled his own expression and waited, figuratively, for her to "boost the pot," "chip along," or "drop out."

She "stayed!"

He "called."

"You have seen some of my stunts with a deck of cards. Did you, by chance, think that I kept

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in practise for any other reason?" His tone was careless and even. He was squatting, cowboy fashion by a tiny cook-fire, frying bacon.

He slipped the crisp slices on a clean piece of birch-bark, and spearing a freshly baked frying-pan "bannock" with his hunting-knife, handed the rustic meal to his companion.

Doris sensed that she had stumbled on to another "something" in this fascinating man's character, and seizing the opportunity she started to tease him.

"Why, I always thought that no one but gamblers carried cards about with them," she flung, the light of battle in her glorious eyes. She loved to make this boy-man squirm.

The results startled her.

"Ma'am," he said sternly, standing up and towering above her, "I never play cards or other games for money." Then he wandered away by himself, leaving his lunch quite untasted.

Doris giggled shamefacedly to herself and then, truth to tell, rather neglected her own lunch, which, most appetizing at the outset, now seemed distasteful and smoky. So she thoughtfully fed it to the pups and began to gather up the things.

As The Kid was smoking in a terribly lonesome fashion she called to him. He came back to her as listlessly as he had gone away and took

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from her hand the bannock she bade him eat. Then they put out the little fire, and with some neutral remarks about the extreme dryness of the weather, trekked back to The Kid's claim.

As they were about to leave the tidy camp for the night The Kid suddenly turned upon the startled Doris and asked gruffly, "Would you dislike me if I did gamble, ma'am?"

They were standing by the door of the hut. From the time, two hours before, that Doris had slurred the word "gambler" at him, neither had referred to the subject. Doris was touched. There was an unmistakable undertone of pleading in the man's voice.

"Why, Pardner," she cried, putting her hand gently upon his arm, and rather at a loss for words, "I don't, — I can't, — that is, a little gambling is done, you know, by the best people; but gambling as a profession,—that, of course, you understand, is disreputable."

The Kid placed his hand impulsively over hers, then disengaged it. Turning away he said in a muffled voice, "I know."

Before either The Kid or Doris could follow further this dangerous trend of thought, and if one may say so, of feeling, Juno, the great Dane, came trotting up the trail with something white in her mouth. She laid it at her master's feet,

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then looked up into his face and wagged her tail for approbation.

“What has she got?” cried Doris excitedly.

The Kid stooped and picked up a much crumpled sheet of notepaper. He smoothed it out and read curiously. His brow wrinkled and he re-read it. Then he folded the paper and buttoned it into the pocket of his khaki shirt.

To Doris, who was fairly doing a foxtrot in her curiosity, he merely explained, “It’s just a business note. Juno is trained to bring them to me, you know.”

“But what does it say? Whom is it from? Do tell me. Read it. We are partners.” Doris pleaded in a most delightfully childish manner.

“It is just business,—my business. It would not be of interest to you,” he reminded her gently.

“I beg your pardon,” apologized this girl of girls. And then not satisfied with the way he had winced at the accent on “beg,” she added, with a wonderful stress of sorrow and resignation in her voice, “I forgot that we are *not* partners in everything!”

The Kid, hardly able to control himself, half reached out to take Doris in his arms. He wanted so to tell her that he wished she would be his partner in everything! But how could he, a gambler’s son, dare aspire to such an

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angel of polite society and piety? He did control the impulse, though not before Doris had sensed the meaning of his gesture. She was somewhat frightened and more than satisfied with herself. But she still wanted to see a letter that she felt was her business in spite of The Kid's protestations.

"Oh, never mind!" she laughed. "Come on home! Here Pinto! Come, pups! Come on, Juno! You ought to be called Mercury,—bringing messages like that. Come on home!" And she dashed away down the trail, the dogs bounding about her, "like wolves around a faun," The Kid thought, as he trotted behind.

He saw her, as usual, almost to the door of the hotel and then crossed the lake in the motor-ferry, dogs and all. Going over in the boat he re-read the letter brought to him by Juno. It ran,

"Dear Son,—

"Your letter very obscure. I have the Green sisters and other spiritualists all lined up to buy Miracle stock to their limit, and will even margin some for them; also, old Sherman and many others. Can advance the price and still unload if mine no good. Now is the psychological time. Attitude may change. Get definite dope to me

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at once about the new strike Doris is reported as finding.

Dad."

Buck Taylor, Jr., had indeed been careless when he had flung his coat over his arm after stealing some of The Kid's gold. And Juno's nose was keen and her eyes sharp. The crumpled paper found on a stranger's trail had meant just one thing to her: she must take it to her master.

CHAPTER IX.

BUCK found his legal adviser in a shrewd character locally known as "One Leg" Blackstock. That he was a lawyer was proved by his practice, or perhaps practices would be a better term. It was even rumored that he was a K.C. Judging from his personal habits, if the King had really appointed him Counselor, it must have been in an advisory capacity pertaining to various brands and vintages of liquors and wines, rather than contracts and briefs. The appellation of "One Leg" had been attached because his initials were O. L. and he walked, when sober, with an awkward if efficient limp.

Buck, as mentioned before, found him, and strange to say, found him relatively sober. A retainer of twenty dollars opened the negotiations pleasantly. One Leg paused only long enough between the introductory remarks of his client and his first bit of legal advice to send the cigarette-smoking student, who acted as his valet and office boy, over to Pete's Place for another bottle.

"I understand, Mr. Taylor," he said impressively, as he settled his fat and untidy body more comfortably in the rickety kitchen chair that did

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its best as an adjunct to a legal office in a disorderly tent, "Winfeld owns the claim under license. It is registered only under his initials, not his full name. That may be illegal. Then you doubt if the initials are those of a bona fide Christian name? That gives us food for litigation. You also doubt the authenticity of the lines of his claim? I doubt if we can find any irregularity there, but we can give him quite a fight, if we run a fake survey, to prove that there is not. Then you say his license will expire in a short time. You want to jump his ground at the least shadow of an excuse. Is that all?"

"No, I want to find out if there is any other way to bother him. I want his ground, but I don't want it badly enough to pay a big price," explained Buck.

"How much?" asked the old lawyer. "About ten thousand dollars would be right, I think."

"He very likely would be glad to sell for that," mused One Leg rubbing his pudgy, dirty hands together in anticipation.

This deal began to smell like real money to him. Then he added, "It would be much the better way to buy him out if possible. I shall be glad to handle the matter for you." The old shyster was quite entranced with the thought

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of collecting his fees from Buck on one hand, and making The Kid pay a handsome commission through some dummy, upon the other. That would give him easy and quick cash, and he could stay out of court and keep drunk most of the time.

"I do not think that he would take that sum," disagreed Buck, picturing to himself that wonderful pile of gold-ladened quartz in the bottom of the shaft. "Still he might, especially if you put him to some bother and expense to protect his interest. Go to it, old man. I want action;" and patting his pocket suggestively, "I've got the coin to pay,—provided I do get action. Buy the claim if you can, but keep my name out of the deal. Get busy. So long!" Buck, rather disgusted with the squalid surroundings, turned up his aristocratic nose and hurried out of the unpleasant canvas "office."

He felt a trifle elated as he went back to the hotel. One Leg Blackstock had struck him as being a very discerning and capable lawyer. He rather counted upon results favorable to his plans from that quarter. He was now more exercised about a probable acquaintance between The Kid and Doris than he was about manœuvring his enemy into a position where he would have to sell,—at Buck's price. That he undervalued the resourcefulness of his opponent, was

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characteristic. He had little fear that so far as Doris was concerned he could put The Kid in such a position that any liking she might have for the fellow would be speedily dispelled,—that is, when he told her some facts.

That same evening he cornered that young person in the upper hall of the hotel which served as a ladies' parlor in this simple and hurriedly architected edifice.

"That is quite a sensational pocket Mr. Kid Winfeld has uncovered on his claim, is it not, Miss Doris?" he queried casually.

Doris looked uncomfortable.

"He gave you those samples, did he not?"

"What right have you to question me, sir?" flung Doris, looking very prettily defiant.

"Oh, Miss Doris, don't be angry, I beg of you. I asked only because I felt,—that is,—it seems to me,—" Buck stuttered and paused, feeling that in his anxiety he had been undiplomatic.

"Well?" Miss Sherman's tiny foot was tapping the floor imperiously.

"It was, of course, all right to take the nuggets, but it would not be wise to go on being friendly with a rough-neck like Winfeld."

"Rough-neck, indeed!" cried the outraged girl. "He is always most gentlemanly, I can assure you, sir!"

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“Oh, so you have been getting quite well acquainted then?”

“I did not say so.”

“You inferred as much. And I can say that you have been seen with him. Dirty, low-down gamblers are certainly not fit company for your esteemed father’s daughter.”

“Gambler!” gasped Doris, her eyes like great violets in their intensity. “What do you mean?”

“I mean that this Kid Winfeld is a camp follower and a gambler. He runs a card joint over across the lake in Golden City.”

“I don’t believe it,” declared The Kid’s loyal friend, stamping her foot emphatically.

“He does though,” smiled Buck, “and any one around here can tell you so.”

“I would never believe it unless I saw it with my own eyes,” insisted the girl, almost tearful in her defence.

“That would be impossible. No ladies are allowed in The Kid’s game. But I will undertake to conduct any one whose word you will take over to Winfeld’s place and show him that what I say is true. You pick the man. Who will it be?”

Doris thought quickly. This awful story could not be true. But she must know, and that from some one’s lips other than Taylor’s, who she felt was not entirely disinterested.

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"Mr. Robson will go with you if I ask him. But on only one condition will I send him, and that is, that he is not to know why you take him."

"It's a go, young lady," rejoined Buck, triumph in his tone. "You get hold of him and we will go tonight."

"Very well; but I warn you, Buchanan Taylor, that if I find what you say is not true, I'll never, never speak to you again as long as I live. So there!"

"And if it is true, dear, you will marry me and we will live happily ever after,—yes?" laughed the youth, audaciously, trying to catch her hand as she turned to go to find Mr. Robson.

She avoided him petulantly and fled. Buck went downstairs grinning.

"I guess we'll put a tack in The Kid's tire tonight," he exulted. And on the strength of this bit of strategy he bought himself a fifty cent cigar, and taking a seat in the corner, he comfortably contemplated the milling of the gold-seekers in the tiny lobby, through a haze of tobacco smoke.

Doris found both Mr. and Mrs. Robson in their apartment.

"Oh, Mrs. Robson," she gurgled, "Mr. Taylor has been telling me that there are real gambling houses being run right here in Porcupine. Do you believe it? I am so excited!"

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"My dear child, you are not thinking of gambling, are you?" cried that lady in a shocked voice. The care of her charge had been rather sketchy of late. Doris had been so hard to watch and so erratic and energetic in her movements that the older woman had nearly given up in despair. But gambling,—well, that must not be allowed. "That would not do at all!" she finished in a firm voice.

"No, of course not, you old dear. But we've made a sort of bet. Buchanan insisted that there were, and I insist that he is mistaken. I've said that if you'd let Mr. Robson go with Mr. Taylor to see, why, I would believe Mr. Robson if he told me that he had seen real gambling in a regular place for that purpose with his own eyes."

This involved explanation rather amused Mr. Robson, but he said that he would be glad to see some of the high play reputed to be going on. He sauntered to hunt up Buck. The result of the conference was that they decided to take the ladies with them for a motor-boat sail across the lake and leave them with an engineer's family in Golden City while they went to find the gambling joint. They would call for the girls and take them home. All agreed.

It was about ten o'clock of this hot July evening when the party seated themselves in the swift

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motor launch ferry. Several prospectors were aboard, and all they talked of was the dry weather.

“They aint been no rain for six weeks,” remarked one.

“The whole blamed country is as dry as tinder,” agreed another.

“Great prospectin’ weather though,” averred the first speaker. “But some hombres aint gut sense enough to put out their camp fires. I seen smoke from atop the ridge in two, three places yesterday.”

“Yep, it’s bad, all right,” affirmed another, shaking his grizzled head soberly.

“Oh, I’d just love to see a forest fire,” gushed Doris to her chaperone. “It must be terribly exciting!”

Every one in the boat overheard her.

“Don’t wish to see one, Miss,” warned one of the old prospectors earnestly, but with perfect respect. “It’s hell,—that’s what it is, Miss. My wife and baby was lost in one.”

“Oh, sir!” cried Doris, so contritely that the old fellow forgave her on the spot. “I am so sorry. I did not know. Please forgive me!”

“I knowed yer didn’t know about ‘em, Miss, the way yer spoke. It’s all right, Miss. But tell yer city friends to be mighty kerful of

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matches when they visits this timber and muskeg neck-o'-the-woods. That's all."

"I surely shall," Doris assured him, as the boat made the dock at Golden City.

The party picked its way along the rough board walk of the main street. Buck was gay, but Doris' heart was heavy, and she had to clinch her little hands in order to control her nerves. Had her "Pardner" deceived her? It began to look as though he had. The Robsons took the whole thing as a mild lark.

The men left the ladies at the friend's house, and Buck guided Robson to The Kid's place.

"I've been here before, but I didn't like to let on before the Missus. The Kid is a nice young fellow and runs a good clean game."

"That so?" asked Buck, a shade sarcastically as he knocked on the door in the peculiar way that Blare had shown him upon his first visit.

The old cockney lucky opened the door after peering at Mr. Robson through the peep-hole. He knew the latter favorably, but had his doubts about Buck. He bade them enter. The game was in full swing. On the table were great piles of greenbacks and coin. The Kid was sitting on his high stool, behind the banker, intently watching the game from beneath his green eye-shade. He jumped down to welcome the newcomers, shaking hands with Mr. Robson before he dis-

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covered who his companion was. At Buck he nodded coolly.

“Evening, Mr. Robson; evening, Taylor,” he thus greeted his guests. “There will be a vacancy or two in a few minutes. Two of my friends are retiring.” His tone was matter-of-fact. His training forbade his allowing personalities to interfere with business.

“We do not care to play, thanks,” replied Robson. “Just dropped in to say how-de-do. How are the dogs? They tell me that you have a team that will make them all hustle when sledding time comes round.”

“Yes? The dogs are pretty fine, thanks. Won’t you sit down?”

“No. No, thanks. We are going right along. Don’t let us keep you from the game, Kid,” responded the genial Robson. “And say, if you feel like working any time, come over to the Vipond. I need a live-wire time-keeper to keep these I.W.W.’s on the job. They are a shiftless bunch.”

“Thank you, Boss. I’ll call on you before the flour-sack gets too low. I’m too lazy to work just now.”

“Like to dig nuggets and picnic with young ladies, eh, Bo?” laughed Buck meaningly, but in such a tone that no one beside The Kid could possibly read a serious challenge in the words.

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The latter regarded the young broker with a cold and level look. He was completely taken by surprise, but never batted an eye.

"It sounds like a pleasant pastime," he grated in a very low voice, "especially when the ladies like it. Good night, gentlemen."

He was rewarded by a nasty gleam in Buck's eyes as he climbed upon his stool and seemed to concentrate upon the play.

The two adventurers went out and shortly after rejoined the ladies.

"Nice fellow, that Kid," enthused Robson to the girls.

Doris was silent, but her heart was beating as though to burst its snowy bounds.

"Did you,—that is,—did he,—I mean, does he run a gambling house?" she at last summoned courage to inquire, at the same time trying to appear only properly interested.

"Sure, he does," guffawed Buck loudly. "You lose, Miss Doris! I'm going to be frightfully sorry to collect our little wager. Ha! Ha!"

"I was not asking you, sir," she snapped, turning on him with fury. "I was speaking to Mr. Robson."

"Pardon me. I——" Buck started.

"I am afraid that Mr. Taylor wins the wager, whatever it may be, Miss Sherman," smiled the engineer, little knowing the cruel pain he

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was inflicting. "This so-called Kid' certainly runs a place where they gamble for real money and lots of it. It was going full tilt when we went in, and was still thriving when we left. But he is well liked though, and his game has the reputation of being honest, and his place quiet and respectable,—for a gambling-joint."

"I see," mused Doris in a toneless voice. The light seemed to have gone completely out of her life.

The mining town was garish and dirty. There was no romance in the smelly motor-boat, nor about the unkempt prospectors that seemed to ride perpetually back and forth across the oily calm water of the lake. The stars shone dimly through a heavy haze. An acrid tang tainted the chill night air. Buck kept up an untimely chatter of Toledo and its people, but the other members of the passenger list were content with slothful yeas and nays. Doris, at first, bored with her admirer's patter, gradually felt herself listening to familiar home names with semi-interest, and just before the boat made the dock she had to smile as Buck caught the rhythm of the syncopating explosions of the poorly timed ignition on the engine, and tapped a comic fox-trot with his feet. After all he was young, vigorous and good-looking. She had a sort of homey and protected feeling when in his company.

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There was no disturbing or bizarre element about him. The girl had taken a sudden dislike to the rough country and its uncertain characters. The confidence and hopes which had been rather forced upon her had been cruelly and suddenly shattered, and through no fault of her own. She felt injured. She took Buck's hand as he assisted her from the boat with a positive relief and forced herself to talk as gaily as he while they all walked to the hotel.

Before the Robsons and Buck said goodnight to her she announced her decision to return to Toledo within the next day or two. Buck had no opportunity to gloat over his victory that night, but as soon as he was dismissed hurried to the telegraph office and wired his father, somewhat as follows,

“Buchanan Taylor, Toledo, Ohio.

Doris returning home at once. Things very favorable. Better not sell but keep in readiness for purchase.

Buck.”

Then he went contentedly to bed.

July the seventeenth dawned in a dead calm. The sun rose like a sultry and portentous ball of moulten red hot steel. A pall of smoke lay over all the land. Small bush fires had been reported in widely separated districts of Porcupine, to

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be extinguished by sweating wardens rushed to the scene.

The Kid awoke at eight and after his usual plunge in the lake accompanied by his dogs, dressed and went to "The Chinks" for breakfast. Hardly was he half finished when he was interrupted by Dutchy Messer shuffling in and sitting down near him. Dutchy was grouchy; a debauch on cheap whisky the previous night had left him feeling as ugly as he looked. One of The Kid's pups, now an overgrown monster, but still of puppy, and playful disposition, dodged a surly kick as the big ruffian took his seat. Feeling that perhaps it had committed some social error, the well meaning youngster wagged its tail ingratiatingly and ventured to approach him for the purpose of apologising in dog-fashion.

"Git t'ell outen here, yer tarn hund," cursed the discourteous recipient of these attentions, and struck the pup a smashing blow across the head with his clenched fist.

The unexpected cruelty sent the poor animal spinning end over end into a corner.

"Here, you Chink!" then yelled the enraged miner to the startled Chinese proprietor, "Jase dat hund outen here, or Dutchy Messer'll bull dat cow's dail yer vare fer un handle clean offen yer creasy kopf!"

Dutchy had not noticed The Kid among the

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other breakfasters and probably did not know nor care whose dog he was abusing. He was made aware of his mistake precipitously. Our friend jumped from his stool at the lunch counter and stepping up behind the burly miner clapped his hand on his shoulder and spun him round.

Dutchy hardly had time to comprehend whom he was facing when The Kid's practised fist drove full force against his great hairy mouth. The blow knocked him back against the counter, and before he could defend himself a stinging left swing sent him reeling half way across the restaurant.

“You big piece of Dutch cheese!” hissed Winfield. “Get up and get out!”

Dutchy sprang to his feet and with a roar like a mad bull ran at his antagonist, head down. Kid Winfield caught the menacing bullet-like poll beneath his arm, and letting the full weight of the onrushing miner carry him backwards towards the wall, he turned his lithe body just enough so that it was the head of the Dutchman and not The Kid that brought up against the wall first. Dutchy literally butted himself into temporary unconsciousness. When The Kid let go a limp heap dropped to the floor.

“Good for you, Kid!”

“Well done, boy!”

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"That'll hold him for a while, I guess," and such remarks were addressed to the victor from the approving bystanders.

A glass of cold water brought the bully out of the land of dreams. The Chink, certain now of both moral and physical support from his other customers, gave the fallen disturber a piece of his oriental mind.

"You allee-samee' velly blad hombre! You kletchem t'ell out! Sing Ling lun specable joint. No Dultchys allee-samee allow. You vamoose! Click! Allee-samee hit 'em trail! Sing Ling flix allee-samee pig cheese much hottee water. Boil 'em allee-samee lobster! You hear 'em?"

The Chinese proprietor held a very efficient looking and steaming kettle of boiling water so close to the dazed miner's nose that he yelled in terror. Quickly scrambling to his feet he departed whence he came, muttering imprecations against everything from dogs to Chinamen.

As the screen door slammed the breakfasters, including The Kid, again took their seats and proceeded to finish their meals with added zest. The Chinaman refused to take any pay for The Kid's repast and kow-towing most respectfully declaimed, "You, Kid, allee-samee glate Melican mans. Sing Ling allee-samee your boy. You allee-samee boss. Me allee-samee glad. So long!"

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The Kid, knowing the breed and appreciating his well meaning courtesy, laughingly accepted his hospitality in the spirit in which it was extended and left the cafe with the injured pup slinking at his heels.

CHAPTER X

KID WINFELD went to the post office and there found a letter from a stranger. It ran,

South Porcupine
July 17th, 1911.

“Dear Mr. Winfeld,—

I have been working around the camp as a miner with a view to getting some inside information about the mines here. I represent a small eastern syndicate that has a little cash with which to buy a good prospect. Having heard some rumors about a find made on your claim, I have concluded to approach you with a view to some investigation. If satisfactory this might lead to an offer of purchase. If you care to come over to the West Dome at noon we can have a bite in the cook-house and chat afterwards. Shall expect to see you either today or tomorrow.

Yours truly,

Nicholas Hyde.”

“Nicholas Hyde?” murmured The Kid puzzled. It was a new name to him in the district. “Well, I had better trail over that way and take a look at this cute hombre. He sure has a novel

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method of sizing up the camp,—if he is on the level.” And with this intention in mind he returned to his rooms.

Before he set out upon this quest he locked the pups in their shed, and taking Juno struck across country toward his claim. It was but little out of his way and he liked to visit his property daily to make sure that his discovery had not been left exposed by too curious visitors.

The smoke pall that had been hanging over northern Ontario for days had increased in density, a little each day, until hardly any one paid much attention to it. Juno, however, was uneasy. She would sniff and sneeze every once in a while, and when her master entered his cabin she sat down outside the door and gave tongue to a most forlorn and distressed howl.

“Shut up, you old fuss-budget!” laughed her master, as he came out and looked around to see if everything was in order about the place, which lately he had learned to love as a real home.

Except for an old ax sticking in a log by the wood pile all of his tools and other easily removable property were inside the hut. He started to put the ax away, but as it was old and dull it hardly seemed worth while to bother about it. He chirped to his dog and set off at a

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good pace in the direction of the West Dome Mine.

That same morning Miss Sherman arose most reluctantly and languidly. The smoke outside permitted the sun to show only as a ball of fire through the fog. The street, or rather, the dry sun-caked mud trail that passed as a street, looked forlorn and dirty. She turned from the window in disgust. After her usual system of exercises and baptism of cold water she absent-mindedly dressed. Not until she had completed her toilet did she realize that instead of the civilized frock she had selected the night before, she had donned her natty sport suit, high laced boots and all. The khaki breeches and belted jacket were very becoming, she noticed in the mirror.

"Well, I never!" she exclaimed aloud. "All dressed up and no place to go!"

There was a sinking sensation in the pit of her being, as it were, at the portentousness of her self-directed remark. Indeed the disappointed child felt that she had no place to go, and that men, Kid Winfeld in particular, were simply unspeakably deceitful and horrid. She went down to breakfast. Youth must have food. Then she went to the post-office. As her chaperone was not yet in evidence she went toward the new railroad terminus and crossing the badly fin-

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ished grade walked briskly in the direction of The Kid's claim. It was with no intention, she assured herself, of really going to the late rendezvous. She did not wish to go there. Certainly not! But strange as it may seem her feet carried her along willy-nilly until she was within sight of the well known ridge, so familiar from her previous visits.

As no one was about she ventured nearer, and then bravely decided to take a last close survey of the region of all her blasted faith in human nature, (that is, of the male persuasion) and of the scene of her wonderful adventures with "her miner" before she learned of his deceit and shady reputation.

She approached the cabin; finding it deserted she entered and seated herself on the rickety barrel chair that she had sat in upon the first day of her acquaintance with her fascinating host. As she rocked back and forth in this ingenious piece of furniture mounted upon its creaky stave rockers, many little knicknacks reminded her of the pleasant lunches and talks before the rough fire-place. She had a bit of a headache, and the air seemed so sultry and—heavy.— She dozed.

With a start she suddenly came wide awake.

"What was that?" she exclaimed with a shudder.

The door had slammed to. Some one was

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pounding on the outside of the rough door-jamb. She was for the moment too frightened to move. She disliked being caught in such a position. The pounding ceased. She gathered her courage and decided to face down whomever it might be.

“Come in!” she called, in as brave a voice as she could muster.

There was no answer. She called again and then went to the door and tried to open it. It was fastened on the outside. She shook it and called out that she could not open it. Still there was no reply. She threw all the weight of her vigorous young body against the door, but it would not yield.

“This is queer,” she said aloud. She glanced around for another means of exit. There was a very small light of glass that served for a window in the roof, too high to reach and also too small for even her slender frame to pass through; beside there was no way of reaching it: no boxes or barrels or furniture with which to improvise a scaffold or staging. She found herself in a stout prison pen. She made up her mind to sit down and wait. Surely he would come.

He had told her that he visited the cabin daily, and as it was hardly ten o’clock he would probably be here shortly. She would have to make the best excuses she could. Her eyes lighted up-

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on a small belt to which was attached a tiny compass. Her excuse was instantly formed to suit the occasion. It was her belt and compass. Naturally she had come to get them before leaving the camp for home. That point settled, she felt more complacent, and rather enjoyed thinking up ways and means of greeting The Kid when he did appear. Then she began to cough. She tried the door again and wondered who could have closed and locked it. That the door had been fastened by any one with an ulterior purpose had not occurred to the girl. The wind had begun to sough outside, and she smelt strong acrid smoke. It made her eyes smart and she coughed frequently.

“If only some one would come!” she pleaded, walking back and forth like a caged animal. “Something is burning.”

Buck Taylor also had gone that morning to the West Dome Mine. They had some core-drills working there and he wanted to see the operation with a view to testing the formation upon the Miracle claim. He happened to be sitting in the office with the mine manager when The Kid arrived with Juno.

“’Low, Mr. Wise,” smiled young Winfeld, shaking hands with “Bob” Wise, the most genial and capable engineer in Porcupine.

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“ ‘Low yourself, Kid. How’s tricks? Set up. Set up.’ ”

“No, thanks. You seem to be busy. Have you a chap here named Nick Hyde?”

“Yep, in the shaft. Be up when they fire at eleven o’clock. Not going to hire him away from me, are you?”

“No chance, Boss,” laughed The Kid. “Wouldn’t like to have you step on me for a trick like that.”

Bob weighed three hundred and fifty pounds.

“Just wanted to chat with him,” finished The Kid.

“All right, boy. Go to it. They’ll shoot pretty soon now. Help yourself. Sorry you won’t sit in. This is Mr. Taylor, Kid. You two have met perhaps?”

Buck laughed pleasantly. He always did when in doubt about what to say.

The Kid remarked carelessly, “Yes, we’ve met. See you later, gents.”

He stepped out of the office into the haze. As he walked toward the shaft-house he did not notice that Juno had disappeared. He did note, however, that the wind was rising and that heavy smoke denoted fires to the northwest.

Some few minutes past eleven, for Doris had been watching the time drag by and wishing that her wrist watch would go at least twice its nor-

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mal pace, the smoke had become so thick in the cabin that she had to sit near the door to get the benefit of the fresher air coming through the cracks, she heard a scratching and sniffing just outside; then a whine.

"It's a dog! He must be coming at last," she thought. "O goody!"

She tried to restrain her coughing spells and look dignified. The scratching and sniffing continued, and as no one came to open the door she called,

"Here, Juno. Here good old doggie!"

A gruff bark, unmistakably the mother dog, responded outside. This was followed by a violent rattling of the big wooden latch that The Kid had taught the dog to lift by pulling on a bit of rope. The door did not open. There was a hard thump as though a heavy body were hurling itself against it.

"It is Juno all right," thought Doris, and she continued to talk soothingly to the now frantic animal.

"Where is your master, old girl?" she asked, just as though the dumb creature could answer.

Juno whined and scratched with terrible insistence. Suddenly Doris had an idea. She picked up a piece of paper that had been the recipient of some of their recent luncheon supplies, and seizing a piece of charred twig out of

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the fire-place, scrawled on it in rough but quite legible letters the following words,

“Locked in your cabin. Come and get me out. It’s smoky and horrid.

Doris Sherman,
Claim 982.”

This note she folded, and getting Juno’s attention, slipped it under the door.

“Take it to The Kid, Juno,” she commanded. “Take it to your master! Take it, Juno. Go on! Run with it!”

The paper was pulled quickly from view, and Doris heard the old bitch leap away.

A paroxysm of coughing nearly choked her. She lay near the crack of the door to get what air she could.

As the shots were fired in the West Dome shaft Mr. Wise and Buck came out of the office.

“Whew!” exclaimed the former, an old timer in frontier work. “There is a Hell of a fire not far from here!”

Buck coughed and looked uneasy. “Guess I better be going,” he hazarded. “I can look at the drills working later.”

Just then a man rode in on horseback.

“Say, Boss,” he shouted, “better hook up the horses and get t’ell outer here. There is fire all around you!”

“There is plenty smoke,” agreed the big en-

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gineer; "but no fire near, is there?"

"Sure! It's crossed the road between here and the south end."

"The deuce, you say! That's bad. But I've made all preparations. Three times this week we have made ready to move out, and each time it's been a false alarm. Guess we'll hold on a while yet. We have lots of buckets and a pump at the lake yonder. The compressed air runs right to it. We can fight her if she comes."

"But, man dear," expostulated the other, "this is a regular fire. Better git while the gittin' is good. I am going over to the Apex and warn them."

"Go to it, son! I'll have the horses ready, and if we can't fight it we'll run. On your way now. Vamoose!" And as the messenger dug his heels into his pony's flanks Wise turned and led the way to the shaft-house.

He and Buck were hardly there when a squall of smoke-ladened wind swept down upon them. Both men ducked.

"Gee! That was hot!" gasped Buck, nearly stifled by the gaseous vapor.

"Come on, boy!" panted Wise, continuing toward their objective, and trotting ahead as though his great bulk were half its weight.

They made the shaft-house, in the lee of which twenty miners were now clustered.

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“Turn on your water!” yelled the big Boss. “Get the hose working!”

The men jumped to the command. Another hellish gust drove them back to the shelter of the building. A great mass of red flames was now plainly discernible dead to windward. Bob Wise took in the situation at a glance.

“We can’t fight that, boys. Get the cook and go into the shaft. It is a good thing we sent the women out to the lake. Come on, Mr. Taylor. It’s the shaft for ours!”

Buck was visibly and frankly frightened. As the men slipped down the shaft The Kid stood and watched them go. He had dipped his hand-kerchief in a water barrel and was holding it to his nose. The top of the shaft-house was already in flames. Buck hesitated by the ladder.

“My God! What shall I do?”

“Come on down!” bawled the great voice of Bob Wise. “It’s your only chance.”

Buck started down the ladder. The Kid did not move.

“Better not go down, Taylor. Come with me. I’m going to run for it. Down behind that rock pile.”

Buck hesitated. There was something that inspired confidence in The Kid’s bearing. It gave Buck courage.

“All right!” he gasped. “Go ahead!”

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The Kid stripped off his coat and dipped it in the water barrel. Buck followed suit. Great cinders were already falling from the roof. They put on their wet coats and with wet handkerchiefs at their faces bolted for the waste dump. The Kid hardly noticed that a great gray shape was again bounding at his heels. The boys ducked over the top of the rock pile, half falling and half scrambling down its lee side to momentary safety. Buck was shaking like a leaf. Great masses of flame and smoke shot over their heads. Their coats smoked; their heads and faces were lobster red. The great Dane crouched at her master's side.

“Oh, my God! I shall never see Doris again!” wailed Buck, now nearly frantic with torture and fright.

The Kid looked at him sharply. Just then the bitch poked her nose into his hand. The Kid saw that she had a crumpled paper in her mouth. It was a moment or two before he realized that this paper which Juno had thrust into his hand was of relative importance. He took it mechanically. The dog crouched whining at his side. Her nervousness was natural under the circumstances. As the great tongues of flame and gas whipped over their heads the three fugitives cowered behind their rock protection and

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ducked at each successive and increasing wave of heat.

“We can’t stand this,” moaned Buck, as another searing flame shot over them.

Although it was full fifty feet above them it almost set their clothes afire as it passed. Dog and men were gasping for breath and moisture. The Kid had been studying a little swale to leeward. He knew that a spring-fed swamp lay in the depression. He made up his mind quickly.

“Look, Taylor,” he husked, “I am going to run for that coolee to the eastward. There is water there and a big ledge just this side. We cannot live here. Come on!”

There was another gust of heat followed by a momentary lull. The men jumped to their feet and ran. Half way to their objective a roar of flaming gas overtook them. They threw themselves flat on their faces. Juno had easily made the ledge and now cowered behind it. Seeing her master on the ground she rushed back and frantically pulled at his smoking coat. He staggered up and on. Then seeing Buck almost in convulsions and unable to rise he turned and assisted him. Supported by The Kid’s nerve, rather than his strength, Buck allowed himself to be urged into a staggering run. Before the next swoop of flames they were over the ledge

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and lying face down in the cool moss of the bog surrounding the spring hole. The ledge made an effective fire break, and The Kid found enough water in the old moose tracks around the spring to quench his terrible thirst. He gave the now exhausted Buck some water dipped up in his hat; then he threw water and wet moss and leaf mould over him until the latter had accumulated a small reserve of strength.

“Dip up some of that water and throw it on me,” he ordered.

Buck complied without much show of interest. After thoroughly wetting each other down they were temporarily more comfortable. It was then The Kid bethought himself of the crumpled paper, which he had put in his pocket. Juno kept whining and pulling at him. She barked a sharp approving note when he took the paper and read it.

The rough characters thereon were easily legible. Buck read some of them over The Kid’s shoulder, but not the signature. Winfeld jumped to his feet and glanced in the direction of his claim. The path of the fire had swept temporarily by the piece of straggling timber country that lay between him and his cabin,—perhaps three-quarters of a mile away. But a sudden eddy of wind would sweep the ravaging red tongues through this dry piece of woodland and

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consume it in half an hour, if the Fates so decreed. His claim was nearly due north from their present refuge. Several small lakes were northwest from his ground and he promptly concluded that they had acted as a fire-break.

“Look, Taylor,” he said, as he decided upon his course of action, “I am leaving you here. A friend is in trouble and I must go to help.”

“And leave me alone?” whined Buck. “I can’t throw water on myself. You’ll get caught in the fire sure. Don’t leave me here alone.” A note of terror had crept into his voice.

Another swoop of flame sent both men to the ground. They buried their faces in the damp moose tracks, and tossed water over each other as soon as it passed.

“There,—you see!” snarled Buck gasping. “That would kill you if it caught you in the open.”

“It is a lady who is in trouble,” averred The Kid, as though that clinched the argument. “I am going.” He stood up and surveyed his chances.

“Oh, to Hell with the women!” sneered the other. “It is every one for himself in a time like this. What is the use of trying to do something impossible just to make a hit with a woman, eh?”

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"You and I think a little differently upon some subjects, Taylor. You stay here. I am off." And The Kid took advantage of a lull and ran, head low, along the lee side of the ridge, then across the smoking bog, and disappeared in an unburnt piece of timber.

"Damn him anyway!" cursed Buck, as he dug himself into the cool wet mud.

It is doubtful if Buck thought of any one else but himself in this crisis. In an hour or so the flames had passed. He pulled himself erect and peeped up over the ridge. He saw nothing but a black and smoking scar where had been the buildings of the West Dome Mine. Not a soul was in sight. The wind was still blowing a howling gale: its breath was scorching and full of hot cinders and ash. Even the rock upon which he stood was hot. He promptly moved down into the comparatively cool swamp.

"Those guys down that shaft," he mused, "had some sense. If that crazy Winfeld hadn't scared me out of it I'd have been down there now, all cool and comfortable instead of blistering here. Lucky guys!"

Cool and comfortable they were indeed. When a search party went down the shaft the next day they found the men sitting or lying about in the most natural positions possible. All

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were stone dead. The burning shaft-house had sucked every bit of oxygen out of the shaft, and the refugees had been painlessly asphyxiated, as was evidenced by the lack of any trace of suffering upon their calm faces.

CHAPTER XI

GUIDED by Juno The Kid went running and stumbling on his hopeless quest; that is, it seemed nearly hopeless to him. In five minutes he was off the burning muskeg and out of the worst of the gas. Taking advantage of natural fire-breaks he somehow managed to avoid being actually caught in one of those devouring sheets of flame that periodically leaped right out of the hot air and roared through the forest like Hell itself,—the heat even cracking the rocks as it passed. In ten minutes the boy was out of the line of fire and made his way by holding fast to Juno's collar. The woods were thick with gaseous smoke. It blinded and choked him cruelly. The great dog kept him moving and repeatedly dragged him to his scorched feet. So he went stubbornly on.

As the man and the dog came to the muskeg bog that nearly surrounded the claim he heard fire crackling. The Kid ran across the opening and through the smoke saw fire ahead.

“My God!” he gasped.

The clump of trees and lately grown stubble about his cabin was blazing briskly, fanned by the heavy wind. The cabin itself was afire. A sudden strength seemed to come into his ex-

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hausted body. He tied his wet handkerchief over his mouth and nose, then rushed through the low but hot flames and reached the door.

A wooden slat was nailed across it on the outside. He pulled it with all his strength, but without effect. Then he spied the ax left by the wood-pile. He seized it and in two strokes knocked off the bar and wrenched open the door.

Doris lay unconscious and panting upon the floor. The cabin roof was just burning through. There was no time to waste. He picked up the inert form, so beautiful in its lethal sleep, and rushed out into the smother of smoke. It had been only a brush fire that had ignited the cabin, so it was but a few rods to comparative safety near a prospect hole. With water from this small shaft he partially revived the girl.

She coughed and gasped but could not speak. With her head in his lap The Kid applied water from the bucket he had filled from the tiny sump. Her eyes remained closed and in spite of all his efforts he could not bring her to more than a semi-conscious state. Desperate with fear for her life, and realizing that he must get her to safety before their retreat was cut off by a change of wind, or other vagary of the Fire god, he decided to take her away, helpless though she was.

He picked her up in his arms and placing her over his shoulder started,—Juno scorched

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and jubilant at his heels. He made straight for Porcupine Lake. The going was rough and he was nearly spent when but half way upon his journey. He placed his precious burden gently upon the grass. The constant inhalation of smoke caused his lungs to burn as though they too were afire.

As the boy looked at the wonderful and quiet face of the apparently sleeping girl he prayed to God to help him and to give him strength. It did not seem possible for him to again lift even Doris' light body from the ground. A new sound now quivered in the air above. A heavier gust of wind swept through the sparse forest about him. A great cloud burst into flame like a monster bomb in the smoke above. A roar as of thunder was heard to windward, but more prolonged and terrifying. A hot blast came down the wind.

"My God! The fire is coming down between the lakes!" he exclaimed aloud.

He seized the girl again and hoisted her to his shoulder, staggering away, instinct and the sagacious Juno to guide him. A few hundred yards was all he could manage. The air all about him seemed ready to burst into flame. He stumbled and fell to one knee. He tried to rise but could not with the girl's weight holding him down. He fell over sidewise like a man shot

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through the lungs. There he lay choking and completely played out.

"We are done!" he groaned. "My knees have given out." He tried to rise without success. He turned his head and saw Doris resting beside him.

A smile played about her beautiful mouth. The Kid was fascinated even in his exhausted state.

"How lovely!" he murmured reverently, and touched her cheek with a gentle finger. Her dimples seemed to deepen and she sighed, snuggling her face against his hand. A flood of courage surged through the boy's broken nerve.

"What a damned shame!" he cursed, struggling to his knees.

Juno here began to sniff and whine, suddenly seizing Doris by the jacket and pulling her bodily toward the lake. This gave The Kid an inspiration. He staggered to his feet.

"Here Juno! Come here! Stand still!"

The dog obeyed, but whined and kept looking toward the sound of the advancing fire. The Kid exercised all his strength and placed the girl astride the great Dane's back. Then with one arm about her shoulders he ordered Juno on.

"Mush!" he commanded. "Slowly, now! Take it easy, old dog!"

The small calvacade moved onward. The

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magnificent bitch walked as easily as a horse, seemingly proud of her load and fully alive to her duties. They made good time and The Kid's tired knees were now quite able to bear his weight. The roar behind them increased. The heat was terrific, but dog and man went stubbornly on their way. Only once did a mishap occur. The Kid stumbled and in doing so dragged the limp burden from Juno's back. The dog was frantic until the girl was again safely mounted.

A few rods more and the lake was in sight. When they reached the margin the fire was a short hundred yards from the water. Juno marched deliberately in until nearly submerged. There she stood and lapped greedily at the cool water. Her great tail wagged to and fro in complete contentment.

The Kid slid the faithful animal's burden into the shallow water and immersed the girl to her neck, then laid her in a few inches of water with her head in the sand protected by his saturated coat. He then plunged in himself all over, and drank a little,—a very little. His experience in the desert countries had taught him the danger of too much water after an enforced period of thirst.

He soon discovered that they were in a protected cove and about half a mile from Golden

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City. As the smoke would lift in the wind he could see that the lake farther out was a smother of foam and wind-lop. He quickly sized up the situation and decided to make a raft to float Doris along the shore to Golden City and medical attendance. There was no forest within fifty yards of the lake upon this side, it having been cut by the railroad builders. But bushes that would make a momentarily hot fire grew right to the lake's edge. He must arrange to keep out in deep water where he could totally submerge to avoid a hot blast if necessary. It was the work of but a minute to find two timbers cut for railway ties lying upon the bank. They had been hewn flat on two sides and were heavy enough to float the unconscious girl. He tied them together with his shirt sleeves; then he floated them over to Doris and lifted her upon them. Pushing out into the deep water he waded along towards the town. Juno swam at his side nervously watching the quiet figure upon the raft.

When great gusts of flame shot far out over the lake The Kid would slide the girl's limp form off into the water, and holding her with one hand he would hang on to the raft with the other. Several times he ducked under and took the girl with him for an instant. At these times Juno would duck, too, as the clouds of flaming

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gas rushed down upon them. Then she would pop up and grab at Doris or The Kid and try to assist them, fearful that all was not right. The Kid was now refreshed enough to spare a laugh for the anxious dog in her zeal.

“You wouldn’t let us drown any more than you would let us burn, would you, old girl?” he gasped, as he placed his charge back upon the raft after one of these ferocious onslaughts of heat.

Juno looked at him with wise but troubled eyes.

The wind had shifted so that it was blowing nearly up the lake in the direction our fugitives were going, and the flames were mostly parallel, rather than athwart their course. As they waded or swam along the shore they passed black bears, rabbits, a moose, several wildcats and innumerable smaller animals, swimming or wading along the bank,—too frightened or scorched to notice each other or the human beings. On one log The Kid saw a squirrel, a rabbit and a small black bear, all quite in accord in meeting the exigencies of the occasion.

As they floated along Winfeld could not but marvel at the appearance of the sky. Great yellow clouds of smoke, driving before the wind far ahead of the ground fire, suddenly would burst into flame with a noise like thunder. It

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was the gas generated by the heated muskeg swamps that he saw. These natural generators would release great masses of hot gas, which when they reached the right altitude would be automatically mixed with a necessary amount of oxygen and then ignited by the flying red-hot cinders. It was this gas that set all northern Ontario afire, miles and miles away from the main ground fires.

As The Kid neared Golden City he found himself so nearly done out that he doubted if he could carry his still unconscious lady to a place of safety. He rightly guessed that the lake had protected this part of the camp from destruction. He had passed several floating human bodies and capsized canoes and boats, so he feared that these denoted that all of South Porcupine had been destroyed.

He was terribly tired and much worried over Doris. He landed in a mass of wreckage and wind-driven water near the town. He tried to carry the girl but was too weak to lift her. As they were now quite out of the line of fire he dragged her on to the beach and pillow'd her head upon his ever faithful and soggy old coat. He told Juno to guard her. He made his way to the main street and found the town only singed. It was full of refugees from the South End. He knew that Mr. Robson, the engineer

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who had visited his room one night with Buck Taylor, often called upon another engineer by the name of Stewart. This man lived on the hill back of King's Place. Thence he staggered. At his knock the door was opened by Mrs. Stewart. She had seen too many blackened and burned faces that awful day to be startled by The Kid's terrible appearance; but she failed to recognize him through his disguise of charcoal and blisters. He placed a hand against the door jamb to steady himself and said briefly, "Miss Doris is down on the beach. She is living but unconscious. Can you send and get her? I find—I—can't—carry her alone. I'm all in."

"Miss Doris!" exclaimed Mrs. Stewart. "You don't mean Mrs. Robson's friend, Doris Sherman?"

"Yes, ma'am. She is a friend of the Robsons! Better come quick. I'll show you."

"Indeed we will," the capable woman declared, calling her husband and son.

They followed The Kid to the beach, Mr. Stewart picked the slight form up in his arms and the party returned to the house. The son, an embryo doctor, recognized gas poisoning symptoms at once and administered a stimulant and antidote. In a few minutes he was rewarded by Doris opening her eyes.

"Those eyes are certainly worth the price of

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quite a lot of medicine," he gushed to his mother a little later.

The Kid stood in the background and accepted a much needed drop of brandy from Mr. Stewart. But he thought of himself only after the young doctor had announced that Miss Sherman's recovery was certain. Then he tossed off his drink and mumbling a shy, "Goodnight, folks!" fled to his own rooms,—without identifying himself to Doris' host or hostess.

He found his faithful old Cockney watching for his return, nearly crazy with anxiety. He fell asleep while being undressed by this solicitous servant. When he awoke twenty-four hours later he could hardly see for bandages.

"What's on these bandages?" he asked.

"Sweet hoil hand soda, sir. You'll be quite hall right, I'm thinking, sir, if you will lay quiet, sir. Yes, sir. Thank you, sir."

"Who says that I have got to keep quiet?" demanded The Kid, pawing the air with his bandaged hands and surveying them critically with an interested and baby-like stare.

The old valet smiled.

"No one, sir; that is, sir, I mean to say, sir, as 'ow I would suggest it, an' it please you, sir."

The Kid moved his body cautiously beneath the blankets and found that he was sore all over. He felt terribly lame and weak, but did not feel

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any burns except upon his face and hands. The servant told him that both were blistered badly, —a condition which had been aggravated by his long soaking in the lake.

“Look, Bo,” he thus addressed his attendant, “you slip up to Stewart’s house and ask how Miss Doris is getting along. And don’t tell them that I sent you. Then beat it back and give me the news pronto. Hurry up! Never mind about me. I can wait ’til you get back.”

The old fellow managed to hide the look of surprise on his face and departed upon his errand wondering. This was the first time since he had been working for Mr. Winfeld that his master had evidenced the slightest interest in a woman. Faithful to the order he went to the Stewart’s back-door and interviewed the maid. After some talk of the fire he diplomatically led up to the subject of Miss Doris. The maid volunteered the information that the young lady was getting better, but still slept most of the time. To the query as to whether she was badly burned, the maid replied that she was not burned at all, as she had come across the lake in a canoe, or boat, which having been upset in the rough water, made it necessary for her to swim ashore.

“She were quite exhausted but not hurt much,” the maid explained. “She hasn’t been

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able to tell the whole story yet on account of sleeping so much."

With this the old servant wandered off towards the crowd streaming to the relief trains. Only when he was out of sight of the loquacious maid did he make his way rapidly back to his master. The Kid was sitting up when he returned and impatient for news.

"Well, old shingle-foot!" he jibbed. "Out with it! What did you learn?"

"The lady, sir, his quite well, thank you, sir, but sleeps hall the time, sir. Yes, sir."

"Is she badly burned?" asked Winfeld anxiously.

"Not at hall, sir, the maid told me, sir," smiled the old man, noting the look of relief in his employer's eyes.

"That's good. You did not tell her who was inquiring, did you?"

"Oh, no, sir."

"That is right. Don't tell her," admonished his master. "I have very good reasons for this course. You'll be careful?"

"Oh, yes, sir. Very good, sir," and the old fellow went about his work of preparing something for his master to eat. He had already doctored Juno, and made her as comfortable as possible in a clean straw bed in the shed.

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The fire had burned over an immense area. Ninety people had lost their lives; that is, that number could be accounted for. There were probably many more. South Porcupine and all the mine buildings in its vicinity had been razed. Timmins and the Hollinger Mine buildings were wiped out. Only the buildings of the north end of the district comprising Golden City were left.

The banks had buried their currency, but every thing else that was burnable had been consumed by the devastating flames. It was a veritable holocaust. All was confusion. Relief trains and doctors and hospital cars had been rushed to the scene as fast as the forest fires would permit. Friends and relatives of the living and dead overloaded the wires with messages and inquiries.

Among many tragedies the one in the West Dome shaft was perhaps the worst of them all. Two men beside Buck and Kid Winfeld had made a last minute resolution and had climbed out of the fatal shaft. They had saved their lives by taking shelter behind the rock pile that our friends had deserted for a better place. But they were terribly burned and incapacitated for weeks. They were able, however, to give the names of most of the men who had been in the West Dome shaft, and included Buck and Win-

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feld in the list of missing. The fact that Buck had turned up after a very uncomfortable night spent in the spring hole behind the ledge concerned nobody but his father, whom he wired.

In the flood of inquiry no one of importance thought of asking about The Kid. Buck confirmed the impression in several quarters that the latter had perished, so his name was included among the dead. As Buck had seen the very woodland into which The Kid had disappeared burst into roaring flames but shortly after he had entered them, he had good reason perhaps for thinking as he did.

Mr. Sherman had wired frantically to the Robsons and after two days found that Doris was safe. Once out of danger himself Buck's inquiries were no less frantic. It took him two days to find Doris at the Stewart's house. Obeying her father's command, which gentleman was by this time on his way to Toronto to meet her, Taylor persuaded the girl to accompany him there by the next train. She would be in the care of a trained nurse. Noting her hesitancy he ruthlessly showed her the newspaper list of dead.

It was a limp and forlorn little maid that allowed herself to be assisted to the temporary siding, that did duty as a station, and lifted aboard the Pullman.

Buck thoughtfully desisted from forcing his

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attentions upon her, and, as she seemed to be in a sort of daze, left her in the drawing-room with the nurse as sole attendant. He did everything that money could do to make her comfortable, and took his immediate reward from a grateful glance or two as he conferred with the nurse at the door, or accepted a message of thanks sent through the same efficient party.

Mr. Sherman was shocked at his daughter's appearance, but was only too thankful to receive her back alive. Not until they reached Toledo did Buck learn through her father that Doris herself had no knowledge of how she had been rescued. She remembered going into a prospector's cabin to get her compass, she had told him, and then she went to sleep.

Whether or not she really remembered at that time having been fastened in the cabin, who can tell? She may have had the best of reasons —now that "her miner" was presumably dead, —for not giving any more details. The shock had been great and it took her a long time to get over it. Perhaps if she had seen Dutchy Messer wandering gloomily around the charred ruins of The Kid's camp some days after the fire and had known his hatred of her friend the mystery of the locked door might have been cleared up. The Stewart's story that she had been found unconscious, washed up on the beach,

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made her wonder until Buck helped solve the riddle.

After he had been back in the city for some weeks, recuperating from his own quite serious burns, and had, through most careful questionings of her father, and artful cross-questionings of Doris, learned some facts, he began to hint to her that he perhaps knew more of her rescue than he cared to tell. Far from being suspicious of his good faith she eagerly listened to these veiled references, hoping to clear up in her own mind the mystery of her rescue. Finally after she had admitted that she seemed to remember that the door of the cabin had been fastened before she fell asleep, and had also trembled before Buck's very pointed remarks that it would not be well to have people know that she had gone there, even to get her personal property, Buck decided to play a trump card for a big stake.

"Don't you really remember, dear, anyone coming and opening the door and letting you out? Honest?"

"No, I do not." Doris' voice was unmistakably sincere.

"Well, I rather hated to tell you, but it was I that went to your assistance."

"You!" breathed Doris, wide-eyed. "You? Why didn't you tell me?"

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Buck for a moment looked very modest and confused; then he had a bright idea.

“You know it is not very good form to parade one’s self as the gallant rescuer of a lady in distress, and—ahem, young Winfeld, the gambler, got the message the dog brought. He said that no man could get through to you alive; but I took the chance, and with fair success it seems. Winfeld and some others perished when they made a dash for the lake.”

Doris sat perfectly still. She was not looking at the nefarious narrator of this yarn. She was examining a very plain mental picture of “her miner” as he had stood over her, looking so honest, and had declared that he never played cards or other games for money. Yet, he had lied. When she sent for him to help her, he had refused to go. It was unforgivable. But then he was now gone,—dead. It was all deplorable and terribly distressing. Great tears rolled down the girl’s cheeks. Quite without warning she buried her face in Buck’s coat and cried as though her heart would break.

Wise in the ways of women he patted her shoulder and let her rest where she chose, saying nothing. Soon she dabbed at her eyes with her handkerchief and sat up.

“I can thank you better for saving my life to-morrow. You are a wonderful, dear, good boy.

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But what can a girl say to a man who has saved her life?"

"Nothing now, honey," answered Buck heartily, rising to go. "There was not much else a regular fellow could do under the circumstances. It was nothing but a plain duty so far as the act itself was concerned. But from my standpoint it would have been torture not to have tried to save you, little sweetheart." He looked fond and sincere enough as he thus declaimed to his lady love, and she believed him unreservedly.

She even submitted to a closer kiss than usual as she smiled him on his way.

When the hall door slammed she retired to her boudoir and cried for half the night.

CHAPTER XII

AS it takes money to get money, so does it take money to get gold. The coffers of three continents were opened and their contents poured into northern Ontario for the relief of Porcupine. The Government and the railroads did wonders to help the situation, as also did charitable organizations and religious institutions. That the members of these same organizations would be repaid for this kindness by being swindled out of millions of dollars by unprincipled brokers and promoters made not one bit of difference. Many sacrifices are always made to permit a few worthy undertakings to survive. This was vastly true of Porcupine. At this writing, out of perhaps two thousand corporations formed for the alleged purpose of working the valuable gold deposits of Porcupine, there are four dividend payers; and this is only a little more than a decade after the discovery of the camp. But who can say that such great mines as the Hollinger, the Big Dome, the McIntyre, and others were not worth the sacrifice? Next to the Rand this Canadian camp has the greatest known gold measures in the world.

The vitality exhibited by the interests behind

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the various ventures was amazing. The recuperative powers of the infant camp after the disastrous fire was perhaps never equalled in the history of mining. Towns were rebuilt upon the ashes of those destroyed. Fire-proof buildings and vast clearings made such another catastrophe impossible.

By the time The Kid was able to get about surveyors were re-establishing claim lines. Quantities of steel frames, machinery and building materials were pouring into the district by the train-load. The Kid rebuilt his cabin and amused himself by arranging a giant wooden latch on the door with a piece of rope attached, so that Juno could enter or leave at will.

No one had leisure to play black-jack, so he spent much of his time at his camp. He was obsessed by a terrible loneliness. Over and over again he repictured to himself every little act and speech and expression of his one-time "pardner" and his too brief acquaintance with her. It all seemed like a dream. He somehow felt as if he might see her again, sometime or somewhere. Just how this was to come about he did not dare to conjecture. She had appeared as if by magic the first time and it would probably be by magic that she would come again. He grew unusually taciturn and even a bit morose

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as he puttered about his "workings," with his dogs as principal companions.

On account of the confusion caused by the fire the Recorders had been instructed to be lenient with delinquent claim owners. A kind of moratorium existed while the registered owners of claims, or their heirs, were being hunted up and notified. But in spite of all that a wise government could do, the lawyers, particularly those of the shyster variety, were having fat pickings. Our worthy friend lately retained by Buck Taylor, Jr., had found the situation very much to his liking.

One October morning The Kid was awakened by the barking of his dogs. He rolled out of his bunk and opening the door called to them. The animals reluctantly obeyed and came trooping in, but kept turning their heads and stopping for a last yap at the cause of their alarm. Winfield quickly put on his moccasins and shutting the dogs in the cabin went to investigate. He found a troupe of surveyors running new claim lines. Upon questioning them the transit man told him that they were working for the government. The Kid watched them for two hours. He was surprised to see the courses they were running, and elicited the disturbing information that the new and correct line apparently ran between his treasure shaft and his cabin. This

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would throw his rich find on the Miracle ground. He argued that if his line was wrong it would throw out all the surveys in that part of the district.

"Well, young feller," smiled the old instrument man, "it will take us a couple of months to get all these lines run, and until we do, every one is going to be in some doubt as to just who owns what ground."

"I see," said Winfeld slowly, a troubled look shadowing his face.

After noting where the engineers established the alleged new corners he returned to his cabin. He set to work with more vigor than he had displayed since his injuries at the time of the fire. He first rolled out on the stone floor of his cabin a large deep iron hand mortar, such as prospectors use, or mill men. Then he pulled out an old iron die which had been discarded from a nearby stamp mill. He next pulled a heavy sack out of a crevice in the cave. The contents of this sack he dumped out on the floor. It contained some of the very richest specimens taken from the pile in his "glory hole," as he termed the shaft where lay his hopes of a mine. Then he produced an earthen ginger-pop bottle, containing quicksilver, and a glass bottle enclosing a few pieces of metallic sodium. Pouring a few ounces of mercury into a cup he

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added a chip of sodium and watched it smoke and sail around like a magic water-bug, as it floated upon the surface. In a few seconds it had disappeared.

“That’s good sodium and good ‘quick,’ ” he mused in a satisfied manner.

Then with a hammer, and using the iron die as an anvil, he began to crack up the gold quartz into small pieces. These he tossed into the mortar. With a heavy iron pestle he proceeded to mortar them to powder. Every little while he would put in a few drops of his prepared quicksilver and add enough water to make a thin mud. A piece of burlap over the top of the mortar kept the material from spattering out on the floor. When he had powdered the ingredients to a pulp he would dump it out into a prospector’s pan. Then in a half barrel of water, which he kept for this purpose, he would roughly “pan” down the contents and shake the barren sand out over the edge and run off the water. And always he would find several ounces of gold amalgam (gold and quicksilver mixed) shining like bits of tinfoil in the bottom of the pan. This he would put in an old pail. If there was any loose, or unamalgamated “quick” left in the pan, he would pour it back into the mortar. He would then crack up some more specimens and mortar away again, repeating the

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same simple process. He kept at this work until all his samples were crushed up and their gold content turned into amalgam. Then he prepared a very late breakfast.

Twice during the day he took advantage of comparative solitude and visited his glory hole. Each time, if any curious person had been watching, they could have seen him stagger to his cabin with a heavy sack of quartz upon his back. They would have seen candle-light in his shaft and heard blasting many nights thereafter.

Within a week The Kid had cleaned out all the ore broken by his old friends from Goldfield, and had blasted out considerable more ore that was even richer than the first. For the next two weeks he pounded up the quartz and panned it out, hardly pausing to eat and sleep. The pile of amalgam had grown to a surprising volume. Twice he had gone to Golden City for more "quick". The shaft looked like a jewelry store, even after he had gouged out all the ore he thought that he could handle for the time being. Then he half filled the hole with muck and threw muddy water on the face of the vein still left exposed. It would make a remarkable showing upon very little investigation.

The Kid wanted a small retort, but was afraid to borrow one on account of the suspicion such a request might give rise to. Retorts in a gold camp

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mean just one thing; some one has gold amalgam that he wishes to separate, and in considerable quantities. So he enclosed a money order to a dealer in Toronto and asked that the article be crated beyond a possibility of recognition. After it arrived he squeezed all the mercury possible out of the amalgam by the simple process of twisting it up, a little at a time, in a piece of chamois leather and catching the loose "quick" that oozed through, in the pan. Then he built a fire in his portable forge, and filling the retort nearly full of amalgam, he slowly heated it. Gradually the mercury vaporized and left the gold. This vapor had to make its exit through the cool and water-jacketed pipe connected to the top of the retort, and there it cooled and condensed and dribbled out in its original form as quicksilver. It was caught in the ever present prospector's pan. The residue left in the retort was gold,—in a porous and spongy looking mass. Gold "sponge" is indeed its correct name.

The Kid had enough sponge after three weeks' work to quite fill a good sized black lead crucible. He added enough flux to enable the mass to melt down, and then placed the heavy vessel on the fire in his forge. He brought it up to a cherry-red heat by patient turning of the handle on the blower. He was at this part of the pro-

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cess for nearly two hours. Then he let the fire die down.

After partaking of a meal he lifted the still warm crucible off the forge with a burlap bag to protect his hands, and placed it on the floor. With a hammer he broke the crucible to pieces. A great truncated cone of gold lay temptingly before him!

“Yip! Yip! Hi - yi!” yoddled The Kid softly in cowboy fashion.

He rapidly juggled the dense chunk of yellow metal into a pan of cold water. When it was cool enough to handle he took it lovingly in his hands. Careful work with a light hammer removed most of the pieces of adhering black slag.

“It must weigh two hundred ounces,” he exclaimed eagerly, “hefting” it.

Not quite satisfied with the appearance of his first “brick” he warmed some nitric acid and water and gave it a good soaking. This softened the rest of the slag, and he soon rubbed it clear. It was a beautiful bright yellow and would have excited far older and more experienced men.

The method by which The Kid reduced his samples to bullion is almost as old as gold mining, and it is still the process used in nearly every stamp-mill in the world where gold is recovered by crushing machinery and amalgamation. Only

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the entire process is done by machinery and upon a large scale.

When Winfeld cleaned his gold he put it in a buckskin "poke", or bag, and hid it. This was to be a sort of emergency fund in case of trouble. Feeling the need of a change he secreted his apparatus and hiked back to Golden City. He placed himself in the hands of the solicitous and much worried old lackey, who had come to look upon the boy as his especial charge in a world full of cares and responsibilities. The old fellow considered that his second, and only a little less important duty was to keep the four big Dane pups from getting into too much mischief. To attempt to describe with any degree of accuracy which of The Kid's followers, man or dogs, made the greatest fuss over him would be beyond the power of a chronicler of a simple tale. The dogs nearly smothered him with their rough demonstrations of joy, and Old Hal, the one-time valet of the rich, fussed about like a hen with a brood of ducklings, as much flustered as if it was a prince of the blood he were valeting rather than the son of a sage-brush gambler.

A few snappy nights put a skim of ice on the lake. The Kid concluded to get his dogs in harness and prepare them for snow. He hitched them to a light toboggan and "mushed" them

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about over the bare ground. With the help of Juno, who needed no practise spins, he soon got the young dogs well on the way to being a banner team.

While The Kid was interested in his family, old One Leg Blackstock was digging up more trouble for the young chap than he deserved. One Leg had been thwarted in his plans. The stool-pigeon he had bribed to make Winfeld offers for his claim had perished in the West Dome shaft. The day before The Kid's lease had expired and just when One Leg had begun to anticipate an easy way to jump his claim, in fact hardly fifteen minutes before the legal time of payment had elapsed, The Kid lounged nonchalantly in and paid the money and received his receipt.

The surveyor had reported that he did not believe his new lines would stand if the government ran a tie line to one of the original stone and concrete corners. He told Blackstock bluntly that he did not have much of a case when it came to setting up new lines not based on original surveys.

"I did not hire you to give advice," the latter snarled. "You run the lines and swear to 'em. That's all. Here's twenty-five dollars more

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than your bill. I want to keep you under retainer. There is more where that came from."

The surveyor thought of his meagre income, shrugged his shoulders and left, pocketing the money. Then One Leg had sent several tentative messages to The Kid about his claim and had been annoyed to learn that the latter had not paid the least attention to them. While he was framing up a lawsuit to dispute The Kid's title, he tried to think of something that would attract his notice and perhaps put him in such a tight corner that he would be glad to talk business. As whiskey was necessary for astute thought he limped into Pete's Place for a surreptitious glass.

A new squad of Provincial Police were making it more difficult all the while to get a drink. As the old lawyer sipped his out of a ginger-ale bottle he heard The Kid's name taken vehemently in vain in sputtering German accents. Turning to survey the speaker he saw Dutchy Messer, slightly under the influence of liquor, and greatly under the influence of a lasting hatred for young Winfeld, defaming the latter shamefully to a couple of leering cronies. One Leg Blackstock was no fool. He had a brilliant if distorted mentality. A plan of campaign began to flutter before his mind's eye. It was illusive yet gradually took shape. Suddenly as Messer

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got up to depart, this plan crystallized. The lawyer beat Dutchy to the door by a well gauged and not too obvious manœuver. He passed out first. As Dutchy stepped out Blackstock hailed him, though he knew him only by sight.

“Nice fall weather, Mr. Messer,” he ventured, smiling a crooked smile.

“Ugh!” grunted the German. “Too tam cold, aint it, fer a feller outer verk?”

“No work?” sympathized the lawyer. “Come on over to my place and perhaps we can find you a job.”

Dutchy was suspicious. He did not like lawyers and he was not over fond of work, but he followed on. His pockets were forlornly empty, and his stomach demanded its ration of alcohol with ever increasing insistence, especially as the weather waxed colder.

“Sit down,” invited the host. “Have a cigar?”

The guest complied greedily, biting off the end with his yellow tusks and letting his porcine eyes rove over the interior of the law office. Books, paper, and dirt littered the room, but to Dutchy it was a marvel of luxury and portentious mystery. He thought vaguely that it was in such places that criminals were condemned to death, or fortunes were miraculously made for miners.

“Well, Mr. Messer, I heard you speaking—

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ah—— ahem, a little unfavorably of an acquaintance of mine,—one Kid Winfeld. Has he got anything on you?"

Dutchy started. Was this a trap?

"Py Gott!" he swore, jumping to his feet and glancing toward the door as if to make a hurried exit.

"Sit down," commanded the lawyer. "He is no friend of mine."

Slowly the big ne'er-do-weel obeyed. He waited for his host to continue.

"What's the trouble between you two anyway?"

"He's a teef! He swiped mein hund; dann schlugete me an die nase; and gut his gang to beat me up! I hate him and will pay him pack! He can't trifle mit Dutchy Messer, py tam!" The German beat his breast savagely.

"So that's it?" exclaimed the lawyer. "Well, you can pay him back and earn twenty-five dollars at the same time, if you do what I tell you." He craftily watched the effects of his words.

"Tell me," urged Messer, licking his protruding red lips and sucking the end of his tobacco-stained mustache in anticipation of this fee and vengeance combined.

"You watch for Winfeld and when he leaves his claim to go to Golden City, you get into his cabin and hide a couple of packages I am going

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to give you. Then beat it over here and collect your money."

"That all?" sniffed Dutchy. "You giff me um, and I'll do it queek. But vat is it to dat?" he finished, curiosity to the fore.

"Never mind, 'vat is it to dat?'" mocked One Leg, now sure of his man. "There will be two paper wrapped parcels. They'll weigh maybe fifty pounds. You are to hide them in that cave they say is in back of his shack. Throw something over them so he won't be apt to notice them. Then you report to me."

"Dutchy's your poy," agreed the erstwhile miner promptly. "Vare's de pack, eh?"

"By the way," ruminated One Leg, as though changing the subject, "The Kid has made quite a discovery on his claim, I am told."

"Perty goot," admitted the other, trying to size up the reason for this change of subject.

"Yes? Well, some friends of mine are going to own his claim before long, and we'll need a good husky foreman to look after it. I'll recommend you for this job if you put this first little errand over to my satisfaction."

Dutchy's eyes glittered in anticipation. A real job and nothing to do but bully around a bunch of miners, and fire 'em if they gave him any back talk! That is what the proposition sounded like to Dutchy.

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"I'll take de chob," he promptly concurred.

"Not so fast, my man!" warned the lawyer, withdrawing the bait a trifle. "You don't get the job unless you do this commission for me to my liking; and perhaps not then if you don't keep your mouth shut. If I hear one word of this from any one, I'll know it came from you, and drunk or sober, there'll be no excuses. See?"

"Shure, I sees, Mister. You come arouse mit dem packs and leef it to Dutchy."

"All right, then. It's a bargain. The packages will be ready for you this afternoon in this office. Bring your pack sack, and take a pick and pan along as if you were going on a prospecting trip. Go in a round-about way to The Kid's claim and hide out. If you do not see him anywhere about sneak up and deliver the goods. Perhaps you'd better find out if he is in Golden City first. If he is, it will be easy."

"Leef it to me!" asserted the other, already planning his little campaign. "I'll be pack fer de pack," and out he shuffled.

One Leg immediately sent his combination "student" and office-boy over to Pete's Place with a note. In a few minutes Pete himself appeared, a scared look on his face.

"Look, Pete," said the lawyer briskly, "you do me a small favor and I'll cut my bill in two for that last liquor case I got you clear of."

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“Sure, Boss. What is it?” asked the bootlegger, relief in his eyes.

“Right. I want you to fix me up six bottles of real rum and a couple of Scotch; also, a quart of alcohol, a bottle of gin, and some of that bug-juice you use to color your booze with. Put in a few empty bottles and some corks and a half dozen glasses. Make the stuff up in two packages and bring them to my office as soon as you can.”

Pete’s face had grown longer and longer as Blackstock had recited his requirements. These demands were ruinous.

“But, boss,” he complained, “I aint gut that much stuff in—”

“Hold on, Pete,” warned the lawyer smiling, “I’ll pay a reasonable price, but no bootlegger’s profit, understand? Cash on delivery.”

“Oh, that’s different,” grinned Pete. “I’ll git yer the stuff,” and he rushed out. He was well satisfied to get his money out of his stock, as the new police were making it very dangerous to keep liquor, it being subject to seizure at any time.

Within the hour he had the desired “stuff” in the lawyer’s office. He took his pay with many expressions of thanks, and a receipted bill for half of what he owed for legal advice.

At the appointed time Dutchy appeared and

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placed the packages in his pack-sack. Armed with the accoutrements of a prospector he started upon his errand. He went via motor boat to Golden City and learned there that The Kid was in town. He immediately departed cross-country for his objective. Dutchy was a rapid traveller and in three hours had accomplished his mission.

He walked into Blackstock's office with a broad smile on his mean face. He told his story. The lawyer smiled and handed over ten dollars, explaining smoothly that the remaining fifteen could be collected at the rate of five dollars a day, *only* if Dutchy kept sober that length of time. This did not suit the old rascal at all, but he was in no position to protest and he knew it.

Pete, in the meantime, and others of his ilk, had been warned by One Leg to sell no booze to Dutchy under penalty of arrest. So the German spent a dry and nervous evening, which a couple of enormous meals served only slightly to mitigate. He kept thinking of those parcels he had left so cunningly concealed in The Kid's cave. A leaky stopper had given Dutchy's nose a pleasant tingle, and he knew that it was liquor he had cached, as well as if Blackstock had told him so. At the time, however, knowing that he was to collect twenty-five dollars, he felt certain

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that he could get all the drinks he wanted upon his return to town, so he refrained from violating his trust. He was nearly frantic for alcohol when he found that his ten dollars could not produce any. To keep himself amused he sat in a game of stud poker. By morning he was stone-broke,—and dry as the Sahara.

CHAPTER XIII

THE next morning The Kid received an anonymous letter. It ran as follows:

“Deer kid, this tells you a couple uv them i.w.ws. hangin round camp has fixed up to rade yore claim tonite and steel sum uv them rich quartz in yore cabin. thay is desprit fellers an plans to let on thay is perlice offisers or sumthin lookin fer booze. better watch out.

“a friend.”

The Kid read this amazing epistle with considerable interest. Then he smiled. Towards evening he slipped his .45 automatic holster under his left arm, and shutting up the pups he called Juno and stepped out. Just before he left he spoke a few words to Old Hal and told him to be on the lookout for Juno if he should send her home with a message. The servant nodded, and trained as he was to never question his master, refrained. But he could not disguise the look of anxiety in his eyes.

“So long, old flat-foot,” said The Kid as he passed out, the light of excitement in his eyes.

“Good hevenin’, sir. Thank you, sir,” returned Old Hal, watching him disappear in the twilight.

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"I guess we can handle quite a gang, eh, Juno?" Thus he addressed the great dog at his side.

"Sure thing, Master," concurred the dog's eyes and tail, just as plainly as if spoken with a human tongue.

But they knew not of the currents and the counter-currents working for their downfall.

About three o'clock of the same afternoon Lawyer Blackstock, who had again put off Dutchy when he had called to collect his second installment, sent for the new and very young Provincial Police Sergeant lately assigned to the district.

"Sergeant," he greeted the young man affably, "you are here, I understand, to clean out these bootleggers. Is that right?"

"Yes, sir. My orders are to show no favor to anyone, sir."

"I am not going to ask any favors; but sometimes we lawyers tumble on to evidence that you fellows might never discover. We are, however, in a peculiar position. Our profession calls for certain ethical standards. We are here to protect the innocent as well as to help punish the guilty. But in any case we must fight for a client's rights and see that he gets a square deal. Do you follow me?"

"Certainly, sir," agreed the other respectfully.

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“Good. Now, you look like a fine upright, clean young man, and you no doubt wish to make a reputation for yourself and stand high in your profession. Am I right?”

“Yes, indeed, sir!”

“So do I, and perhaps I can help you, if in so doing I do not mar my own standing.”

He paused impressively. The young officer felt highly complimented.

“How, sir?” he asked eagerly.

“Well, if I tell you where you can arrest the slickest and slyest bootlegger in Porcupine, and where you can find his cache of booze, can you use the information and act upon it, without in any way bringing in my name? I tell you frankly that a man in my position would be professionally ruined if it was brought out that he mixed up in such an affair. I probably would never get a chance to defend another client in this township.”

“Why, surely, sir, you can trust me to use the information. The arrest and seizure would be enough. I do not have to, nor would I wish to, tell of my sources of information.”

“I have your absolute word, then? On your honor?”

“Absolutely, sir.”

“Right! Now, tonight you go to this cabin” pointing to a map on his desk, “on claim Num-

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ber 892 about nine or ten o'clock. Break open the door if you have to. There you'll find the man, and somewhere in his camp, the evidence you are looking for. But he is a slick one, and you'll have to put the irons on him and take no back talk."

"Fine, sir. Much obliged. We will do our duty, sir. Is there likely to be more than one?"

"No, probably not. I understand his rum is getting shy."

"Righto, Governor," snapped the Sergeant saluting. "Nine or ten tonight, we'll be on the job, sir. Good-afternoon."

"Not a word, now," warned One Leg, his eyes sparkling.

"Not a word, sir," and the ambitious officer hurried out.

It was nearly dark and raining when Winfeld opened the door of his cabin. He made Juno lie down outside. He knew that no one could approach without her giving the alarm. Although the new log house was considerably larger than the other it was nearly full of mining tools and paraphernalia: the natural accumulation of months. As it had been the cave in which most of the combustible property had been stored, the fire had found but little fuel, barring the log walls and the pole roof. Since the fire, the proprietor had rapidly added to his

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outfit; consequently, there was quite a clutter in the cabin. This disorder had made it easy for Dutchy to go in and cache his parcels in a dark corner of the cave end of the abode in a spot where The Kid would not notice them unless he had conducted a deliberate search.

If it had not been for the disastrous and diverting effects of the fire the camp would have taken far more notice of The Kid's rich discovery. Though he was entirely uncommunicative himself, there is no doubt but that others beside the Miracle interests and their minions would have visited the shaft and tried to see, at first hand, the rich ore.

It was not the custom in the north woods to lock doors, the theory being that any one mean enough to steal would break all the locks an owner could contrive.

The rain had already killed the scent left by Dutchy, so that Juno's nose gave her no message she could interpret. Perhaps if her master had thought to invite her inside she would have shown him something.

The Kid, who really had taken the anonymous warning with a grain of salt, soon had a fire going and had cooked his simple meal. Then he tossed a bone and some dried fish outside to Juno, and putting out his candle lit a pipe and

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waited,—hardly daring to hope that any real excitement was brewing.

He had probably smoked an hour when there was a low growl from Juno. He jumped up and stealthily opened the door.

“Sh!” he warned the great brute. She at once ceased all sound, but stood trembling in front of him with suppressed excitement.

He heard a branch crack, then silence. He listened with intense concentration for at least another five minutes.

Snap! Another twig cracked a little nearer. Then he heard a sound on the ridge above,—perhaps twenty yards from where he stood. It was like the rasping of a man’s boot-heel slipping on the rocks. Juno heard this noise, too, and The Kid could see her turn her great head in the gloom. She started toward the ridge.

“Wait!” whispered her master. She froze but crouched her body wolf-fashion, every tendon tensed for a spring. The Kid jerked the automatic from its holster and cocked it.

“Who’s there?” he spoke sharply.

“An officer of the Provincial Police,” barked a gruff voice. “Throw up your hands!” This command was followed by a ray of white light shot from a powerful flash-lamp.

Without a moment’s hesitation The Kid ordered Juno to charge. Like a streak she

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sprang out of the light and evidently upon the man who had held it. A pistol cracked twice, then there was a yell and a heavy body thumped to the ground. The light had waved wildly for an instant, then disappeared.

The Kid had moved hardly a step from the door when another gun cracked from behind him. He felt a blow on the head that almost knocked him down. He partially recovered his equilibrium and cried:

“To me, Juno!” then he staggered backwards into the cabin, his senses reeling.

An iron wheelbarrow back-heeled him and he fell. There was a wild scuffle, with growls and curses intermingled, just outside the door, then the sound of a man running.

“Juno!” The Kid managed to call again. His head was terribly dizzy.

The big dog bounded in and trotted over to her master, wagging her tail as though she had been enjoying herself.

“I’m hurt, old girl,” Winfeld mumbled. He had now slumped down with his back against the wall.

The rising wind swung the door to with a bang. Finally his limp fingers produced a pencil. He tore a leaf from a note-book and in the dim light of the dying fire he managed to scrawl these words:

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“Am hurt at cabin. Get the police.”

With painful concentration he contrived to tie this message in a handkerchief to Juno’s collar.

“Go,—find Hal!” he ordered.

The bitch looked at him, her tail waving slowly and doubtfully. This did not seem a propitious time to leave her master.

“Go find Hal!” The Kid repeated dully, and then tipped over, quite unconscious.

Now sure that she had heard aright, but greatly troubled over her unresponsive master, Juno trotted to the door, and taking the heavy cord that answered for a latch-string, in her teeth, she unlatched and pushed it open. She plunged out into the stormy night.

As The Kid had fallen, so he lay,—between the wall and a wheelbarrow. Other impediments piled upon the floor made a sufficient barricade, so that his prostrate body was quite unnoticeable from the door, or indeed from within the room itself, unless a visitor had been actually making a search.

All was deathly still about the camp. Perhaps half an hour had elapsed when the bulk of a man’s body might have been seen looming in the open doorway of the cabin.

“Wie geht es?” a voice said cautiously.

There was no response. The owner of the

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voice entered and striking a match made his way stealthily to the back of the cave.

"Ah!" the voice gloated. "Py cheese, dey nefer took it!" There was a gutteral oath or two as though a man were lifting a heavy bulk to his shoulder, or adjusting a pack-sack, then a large but very, very soft-footed spectre glided out through the open door.

Chagrined at the rascally old lawyer's procrastination about paying him his promised fee, broke and burning up with a craving for liquor, Dutchy could not but dwell on the tempting supply he had left in The Kid's cave. The memory of that tantalizing odor of the forty over-proof Jamaica rum, which had leaked in transit, was as torture and balm to his alcoholic appetite. Desperate, he had decided to snoop around and try to get an opportunity to again enter Winfeld's place and see if by any chance the liquor was still there.

He had been hiding just across the small muskeg bog when the fracas had started. He had heard, what appeared to him to be, a fight or a raid of some kind. Men had gone away and then all had become silent. Stupid at best, the rascal's nerves were about driving him crazy. All he could think of was liquor. He had reached a stage where he would take almost any chance to get it. Hence he had circled closer

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and closer to the quiet cabin and had finally taken the plunge. If an answer had come from within when he ventured his "Wie geht es," he would probably have turned and run a mile before daring to stop. As no answer had been made he went in and stole the prize.

Instead of going back to the town he had cut across country through a night as black as Hades and taken shelter in a tumble-down cabin in a remote corner of the district. There he slacked his thirst in company with a half-breed squaw. She was perhaps the only person in the world who thought Dutchy a regular fellow and at times a hero. This was one of the times.

CHAPTER XIV

OLD Hal was lying on his cot in the back room of The Kid's suite staring wide-eyed into the dark and listening to the rain beating on the roof. He was uneasy and nervous. Something portentious was in the air. Although fully expecting he knew not what, he almost jumped out of his skin when he heard Juno's bark outside the door.

"Good old doggie!" he wavered, as he tottered about lighting a candle. He opened the door and was nearly knocked over by the great brute as she bounded in. Then she started to bark and frightened the old fellow into fits. She was most insistent and vociferous in her canine demands for him to follow her. He succeeded in getting the handkerchief from her collar at last, and read the message.

He wasted no time in lamentations, but, trained to obedience, threw on some extra clothes and prepared to cross the lake to South Porcupine, where was located the head-quarters of the police. Before he went out he wrote a note to his master telling him that he had received the message and was going for help. This he tied to a stick and placing it in the dog's mouth he ordered her back to her master.

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Quite used to carrying messages between town and The Kid's camp she bounded away, but not without trying to coax, and even pull, Old Hal with her. He had quite a time to persuade her to leave him behind, but finally succeeded in starting her off. Then he hurried to the motor ferry and climbed aboard. A two dollar bill persuaded the captain to put off, regardless of schedules. The skim of ice that had been over the lake on several mornings had been softened by the warm rain and broken up by the wind. The ferries were trying to get all the trade they could before the final freeze-up.

The old valet leaped ashore before the boat had made fast and swiftly made his way to the Police Headquarters. He entered just in time to hear the Sergeant giving two officers a woe-ful berating for some misdemeanor.

"Why are you reporting here?" demanded the Sergeant, in a strident voice. "Aren't two husky old-timers like you enough to pinch one bootlegger without getting all beaten up? What's the big idea?"

"But Sergeant," persisted the one who was standing, the other being slumped, white-faced, in a chair, "the dog! The dog! Don't yer understand that this feller had three or four big dogs, and they hopped on to us from all sides. Bill, there, got his collar-bone broken and his arm all

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torn, and a couple of 'em jumped on my back and nearly shook the life out of me. Then while I was on the ground under a pile of dogs and men, I heard Bill there calling for help. Some one else called off the dogs and I crawled over to him somehow and found him helpless and near bleeding to death. So I had to carry him near half a mile, and then I got some help and here we are. I am sorry, sir."

"That's a fine yarn!" scoffed the young Sergeant. "You are sure a pretty well beaten up pair. Get Bill under a doctor's care; then get another man,—any one off duty,—and report here in half an hour. I'll have to show you fellows how to take a bootlegger."

"Better get a couple more men," suggested the crestfallen policeman. "Fighting big dogs in the black brush aint no picnic, if we did get a beating."

"Two men and — a half — will be enough, I guess," laughed the Sergeant sarcastically, dismissing them.

Then he saw Old Hal standing by impatiently waiting the end of this interview.

"What do you want?" he snapped, annoyed at having an audience at such a time.

"Thank you, sir," quavered the old cockney. "My master, sir, sends word that 'e is in distress, sir. Great distress, sir!"

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"In distress is he?" quizzed the officer. "Who is your master and where is he?"

"My master, an it please you, sir, is Mister Winfeld, and 'e is at 'e's lodge, sir, out to the claim, sir, if it please you, sir."

The Sergeant's eyes grew large and round at this message.

"Mr. Winfeld! Not Kid Winfeld?"

"Yes, sir. And 'e is in great trouble, and wants the police horsifers, sir. Hurry, sir. It must be very important, an it please you, sir."

"It don't please me at all. You work for Winfeld?"

"Yes, sir."

"How long?"

"Never since 'e been 'ere, sir."

"How long?" persisted the Sergeant sharply.

"About a year, sir."

"Know anything about him,—his business, I mean?"

"'E is a gentleman, sir." Old Hal got this off with as much indignation and pride combined as if he had been the servant of a Prince.

"Oh, is he?" questioned the other, raising his eyebrows.

"Yes, sir, and please 'urry, sir, as 'e is in great distress, sir."

"Where is this lodge of his?"

"I can take you there at once, sir. It's 'ardly

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a mile and a 'alf from 'ere, sir. I am going to 'im at once, sir. 'E must be requiring my hat-tention badly by now, sir. Can I show your men the way, sir?"

It ran through the young man's mind that this might be some sort of a trap, so he continued to cross-question the old cockney.

"How do you know your master wants the police?" he asked.

"The message said so, sir."

"What message?"

"The one brought by Juno, sir."

"Juno? Is there a woman in this? Who is Juno?"

"Juno his a dog, sir. A very fine blooded bitch, sir. She brought me the note, sir, saying as 'ow my master needed the police horsifffers. Please 'urry, sir!"

"A dog!" exclaimed the Sergeant. "Brought you the message? Say, what kind of stories are you telling? This whole thing looks queer to me."

"It may, sir, but please 'urry, sir."

"All right," snapped the Sergeant. "We will go with you, but if this is any kind of a plant, it will be a sorry day for your master and you, too. And as for the dogs,—if we are bothered by dogs we will try a little of this on them," and he brandished a gun under Old Hal's nose.

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Be it said to the old fellow's credit, he never batted an eye. He had seen guns handled by The Kid and other masters before him in mining camps from South Africa to the Urals, and in a very much more expert manner.

"Please 'urry, sir," he reiterated, looking the officer coldly in the eye. There was something just beneath the surface in Old Hal's character that the young sergeant only now discovered. He might appear subservient in his language, and even in his mannerisms, but Sergeant Woods felt that he had not made as much of an impression upon this curious servant as he had expected. A partly concealed smile upon the face of an attending officer did not make the situation any easier. He bit his lip and made up his mind very quickly.

He sent for the man who had returned uninjured from the first storming party, and with two others and Old Hal they started for Winfield's cabin. The cockney led the way through the rain with a lantern. He set such a pace that the policemen were wet with something other than the elements by the time they came in sight of the ridge. It appeared as a dim blur against the sky line.

"Now, look," warned Sergeant Woods, "I've got no time to bother with dogs. If any come around here we are going to kill them on sight."

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"You need not be h'afraid, sir," spoke Old Hal simply. "Juno knows me and will be h'as gentle h'as h'a kitten, sir."

The sergeant again bit his lip.

"But there are other dogs, are there not?" he asked.

"No, sir; that h'is, sir, the h'others are at 'ome, sir, locked in the shed. That's Juno now, sir."

A fierce growl rumbled down to them as they started the ascent of The Kid's rocky ridge.

"'ere, Juno!" called Hal. H'it's me h'old girl. Come 'ere. That's a good girl."

Juno suddenly appeared in the lantern light standing stiff-legged as a marble statue, her lip curled up in scorn at Hal's companions.

"H'it's h'all right, Juno," said he conversationally. "Where's your master?"

Juno wagged her great tail and turning trotted ahead up the path, then stopped to see if her guests were coming. A great burden was being lifted from her canine shoulders.

"There is no light in the house," observed Sergeant Woods. "Perhaps your master is not at home."

Old Hal hurried on and without stopping to knock entered the cabin. The officers threw the beams of their search-lights about the interior from the vantage point of the doorway.

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It did not take but a minute for Juno to point out her master, reclining so helplessly behind the wheelbarrow. In a trice the faithful old servant had him in his arms. Carrying him as lightly as a child he placed him on the cot.

“Search the place!” ordered the Sergeant to his men.

While they were ransacking the shack and cave, Hal was examining a contusion on the back of his master’s head. There was a lump about the size and proportions of a tea-cup.

“Some one must ‘ave ‘it ‘im, sir. The poor boy!” he lamented, bathing the spot with cold water.

“Give him some brandy or rum,” suggested Sergeant Woods.

“ ‘E don’t keep none ‘ere, sir, I’m thinking,” said Hal. His sincerity should have been apparent even to a suspicious officer looking for illicit caches of liquor.

“Don’t keep it?” he jeered. “Why, I heard that he kept it by the back-load.”

“Well, you ‘eard wrong, sir,” announced Hal quite respectfully, but firmly. “ ‘E seldom takes h’anything h’at h’all, sir.” Then Hal noticed that the officers were turning his master’s place topsy-turvy as if hunting for something. He was scandalized.

“H’if you’ll pardon me, sir, but may I make

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so bold as to h'ask you, sir, why your men are disturbing Mr. Winfeld's 'ouse? H'it's 'ardly proper, sir, to make so free with my master's things when 'e is quite knocked up, sir. Not that you wouldn't be welcome 'ere if 'e were fit, sir."

"Never mind my men. They are just trying to find some liquor with which to resurrect your precious master. Here, try this." The Sergeant extracted some smelling salts from a vial he carried in an emergency kit and handed them to Hal. Hardly had the bottle been held under The Kid's nose when he gasped and opened his eyes. Catching sight of Sergeant Woods, before he noticed the familiar face of his old servant, his mind snapped back to the warning letter. He took Woods for one of the masquerading I.W.W.'s of whom he had been warned. He tried to jump up, but old Hal quietly restrained him. He lay back, a faint grin over-spreading his boyish countenance.

"So you guys got me after all," he said.

At the sound of his voice, Juno, who had stretched herself at the head of the cot, jumped up and licked his face. This seemed to annoy him and at the same time slightly to clear his vision.

"Juno, you old flub! They beat you to it. You're done, old-timer. You're through." Then

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he rambled incoherently and put his hand to his head. "Gee, my head aches!" He turned his face so that it rested for a moment against the old servant's shoulder.

"Doris," he mumbled, "hold my head tight. They pretty nearly knocked it off!"

His body relaxed and Old Hal let him rest, supporting his neck so that the wound would not receive any pressure. The Kid again lost consciousness.

In the meantime the officers had found no liquor and so reported to the Sergeant. The latter had been watching the servant and his master with a quizzical eye. The whole scene looked genuine enough, but, he concluded, you never can tell!

"Try these salts on him again," he ordered, handing the bottle to Hal.

The old valet obeyed. The Kid responded with a gasp.

"That'll fetch him," grinned the officer.

The Kid tried to sit up and nearly succeeded, but was restrained by his faithful Man Friday.

"Lie quiet, Guv'nor," he admonished gently. "Old Hal will look h'after you. Gentle there now, sir."

The Kid only then recognized his nurse.

"Hello, old flatfoot!" he said simply.

"Very well, sir, an it please you, sir. You'll

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be fit h'as h'a fiddle h'in the morning, sir. Thank you, sir."

"Give me a drink of water, please," ordered The Kid in a weak voice.

The policeman handed Hal a tin dipper full, taken from a barrel outside. The servant lifted his master up so that he could drink.

Winfeld was immediately refreshed and clearer headed. He addressed the policeman.

"Well, now you guys have busted in and busted me up, what are you going to do? You didn't find what you were looking for, because I melted it down and banked it a long while ago."

The Sergeant slipped nearer. This looked like a confession.

"No, we didn't find it, but you might tell us all about it," he suggested confidentially.

"'Old h'on, sir," expostulated Old Hal. "I got you gentlemen here to 'elp my master, not 'inder 'im by questions. You—"

"Shut up, old man!" snapped Sergeant Woods. "When we want you to butt in we'll tell you to. Get me? Now, go ahead, Mr. Winfeld. You were telling us where you hid the booze."

"The booze!" said The Kid in an amazed voice. "I didn't say anything about booze. Who are you guys anyway?"

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“Provincial policemen,” answered Sergeant Woods gravely, throwing his oilskins open and displaying his badge. “And we have come to get you and your stock in trade and put both behind bars.”

There was a gasp of astonishment from Old Hal.

“It’s h’a bloody, bleedin’ h’outrage, sir,” he exclaimed. “Mr. Winfeld never sold h’a drop of liquor in ‘is life. H’i give you . . . !”

“I told you to keep quiet,” ordered the Sergeant. “Here, men, slip the bracelets on this talkative old party.”

The other policemen quietly took Old Hal in hand. He submitted to this indignity without a word. The Kid’s mind was gradually clearing. He turned his eyes slowly towards the Sergeant. Then he spoke, “You know, I suppose, that I own this house?”

“I guess so. What of it?” asked the officer.

“What are you doing here?”

“We are searching for liquor.”

“Have you a warrant?”

“Don’t need any,” hazarded the Sergeant.

“Upon whose complaint are you acting?” asked The Kid coolly.

“Now, look-a-here, young feller,” warned the other, “you can ask all the questions you want to in court. And that’s where we are go-

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ing to take you, and also that slippery old party you call Hal. If you come through clean and tell us where you got that booze hid, it will go a lot easier with you than if you try to hold out. We have got the goods on you, and it will save time and trouble for you if you make things easier for us."

"Yes, but you haven't found any liquor, have you?" persisted The Kid.

Here the officer, who had previously visited the cabin, interrupted.

"No, but we got another charge,—resisting officers, and you and your gang and your dogs damn near killed Officer Kennedy."

"My gang,—and my dogs,—" repeated The Kid slowly. "Say, Sergeant," he continued, "is that guy one of those cowards you sent here early this evening?"

"I'm no coward, sir," denied the policeman indignantly.

"I'll tell the world you are," sneered The Kid. "You are one of two or more men that tried to shoot me in the back. My head is getting clear and I am beginning to remember things."

"Never mind the hard language, young feller," warned the Sergeant. "If you have a story to tell, why tell it, but anything you say may be used against you."

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"Just a minute, Bo," ventured The Kid, deeming moderation the better part of valor. He tried to think and arrange the late happenings in chronological order in his memory. "How long have I been knocked out?" he asked Hal.

The latter explained the best that he could and told of receiving his message. Between them they pieced together the late events into a reasonably understandable fabric. Sergeant Woods listened with all his ears, while the officer whom The Kid had accused of trying to shoot him in the back stood eying both master and dog malevolently.

"See here, Captain," finally offered Winfeld, "I am betting that you are in so bad that you will lose your job if I tell all I know about this mix-up. You say you have the goods on me, and I am darn sure that I have them on you. Now, if you insist that you are right, go ahead and slip the irons on me and take me to jail. But I warn you that if I can prove,—and I think I can,—that you have been made a monkey of by,—well, some one I am not ready to name,—I'll make you the legal fight of your life to hold your job, and sue you for damages besides. Now, make up your mind damn quick. I am getting tired of this funny business."

This was a new type of bootlegger to Sergeant Woods. In his experience bootleggers when

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pinched had either tried to bribe him to gain their liberty, or had confessed and worked on the theory that the less trouble they made for the officers, the easier they got off in the end.

Winfeld seemed so unafraid and confident that the Sergeant began to doubt the wisdom of his tactics. He realized that he had not found any liquid evidence, and this was most embarrassing in view of the fact that he had acted without a search warrant and upon practically an anonymous complaint. He concluded that he was in a fix, if an intelligent and innocent man chose to put up a legal argument.

The Kid, a quick reader of character, sensed this hesitation. He beckoned the officer nearer and said in a low tone, "Captain, I think it would be better for all hands if you'd just ask your men to retire and let us have a confidential chat. In the meantime take those handcuffs off Old Hal. He is harmless and won't run away."

The Sergeant, also a quick thinker, decided it was best to comply.

"Take the bracelets off him," he commanded.

The old servant could not restrain the look of triumph in his eyes when the policeman obeyed.

"Cheap toff!" he hissed under his breath, then laughed at the venomous expression on the officer's face who was following his chief's directions with but poor grace.

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The Kid signalled Hal to come to him. Then fumbling in his pockets he produced a crumpled piece of paper.

“Read this.” Winfeld thrust the anonymous letter that he had received into the cockney’s hands.

The latter read the mysterious scrawl.

“So that’s h’it! Thank you, sir,” he remarked.

“Now that he has seen it, you can,” The Kid stated, taking the paper from Hal and handing it to the Sergeant.

The officer’s eyes narrowed as he read the missive.

“May I have this?” he snapped.

“Not yet, Captain,” replied Winfeld, taking the paper again. “But you may later if necessary.” Then turning to Hal he asked if he still had the message taken to him by Juno.

“Yes sir, thank you, sir.”

“Let’s see it.”

Old Hal produced the note of appeal for the police.

“Read that,” he ordered the Sergeant.

The policeman read as directed.

“And there h’is the note H’i sent back to you by Juno, sir,” cried Hal, picking up a stick from the floor to which was still attached his message to his master. He unwrapped the letter and the Sergeant perused that as well.

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"See here, Captain," suggested The Kid, "don't you see that if I were a bootlegger I would not be sending for the police? If Hal were a partner he would not go for them. Neither would a bootlegger stay to fight the officers, if he knew they were officers. You didn't find any booze, and you can't find a man in this camp that will ever say I sold him any. This is a frame-up by somebody. Who gave you the tip to raid my place, anyway?"

"I can't tell you that, son; not yet anyway. But this thing does look queer, and I'm going to look into it further. Where are your pals and the rest of those big dogs that put my men to route, eh? And what have you got to say about beating up His Majesty's police, eh?"

"That letter told me to expect raiders, didn't it? Your men showed no papers and they didn't give me any chance. If that guy, who fired at me from the rocks and came down after he thought that he had shot me in the back, could have hit anything, I would be dead now. His bullet must have taken a splinter off the roof and that is what struck me. As to pals, I had none but Juno, and she had to lick your fellows all by herself. I hope she did not damage them much."

The Kid grinned and the Sergeant looked

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puzzled, and, it must be admitted, a bit annoyed.

“Here, you,” he said to one of the policemen who was uncomfortably huddled with his pals at the opposite end of the room, “come here!”

The man indicated stepped forward.

“I thought you told me a whole pack of dogs and a number of men attacked you and Bill when you first came here tonight.”

“Not quite that, sir, I said,—you see it was—”

“That will do. You don’t know if there was one dog or twenty, nor how many men, do you, now?”

“Well, no sir,—not exactly.”

“All right. You better keep this whole thing under your hat, or you’ll be the laughing stock of the force, and so will I, for having such men.” He turned his back upon the crestfallen fellow and addressed The Kid.

“Mr. Winfeld, I am going to drop this thing for the present, if you will let me. Also, I am going to find out what is behind it. I think that you have the rights of the case and I will continue to hold that view unless you do something to change it. I believe that we are in wrong, and that you have a kick coming. But there is something behind all this that does not smell right to me. I want to run it down. Are you

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willing to let me do this quietly in my own way, or are you going to take such action that it will be necessary for me to get out in the open to save my reputation, and perhaps scare off the very people who may have put up the job? I am in your hands."

The Kid saw more in the situation than did the Sergeant.

"Go to it, Bo," he agreed. "Work it out any way you like. I'll refrain from publicity if you wish it; only get the idea out of your nut that I am a bootlegger. I don't like that stuff."

"O.K." concurred the officer, a badly concealed expression of relief upon his ruddy face. "Come, men, we are going back to town, and we aren't going to brag much about this little spree either. You understand?" Then turning to Old Hal he said, "We must apologize to you, sir, for putting the irons on you."

"It's quite h'all right, sir. I knew my master would make you take them h'off, sir."

To hide his annoyance the Sergeant ordered his men out.

"Nothing we can do for you, sir?" he suggested to The Kid.

"Yes. You can take this lump off my head and give me back the few hours when I was unconscious."

Winfeld looked perfectly serious as he said

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this. The Sergeant shifted uncomfortably.

"I am afraid, sir, that we can't do much in that line but send a doctor to you at *our* expense. I'll do that willingly, sir."

"Never mind," smiled The Kid. "I guess we can pull through. I'm pretty tired, but so long as the jail party is off you can run along and let Old Flatfoot here fix me up for a little rest."

"Good night, sir." Sergeant Woods snapped a respectful salute.

"Ta-ta," sighed The Kid, and gave himself into the skilful hands of the hovering Hal.

CHAPTER XV

SERGEANT WOODS stamped into Lawyer Blackstock's office early the next morning.

"Well, Sergeant," the latter greeted him, "did you land your man?"

"Yes and no," answered the young officer. "That is to say, we found the man but not one trace of evidence. So in the nature of things and having no witnesses to swear to his keeping for sale, we questioned him and then left."

"That's bad! Very bad!" reiterated the lawyer, looking both surprised and a trifle upset.

"Yes, it is. And may I now inquire where you got your information?"

"No, you may not," returned One Leg snapishly. "It was part of our agreement that no questions should be asked. Are you sure that you searched the place thoroughly?"

"Yes, we did. And I would like to ask if you have any more evidence that can be used against those people?"

"People? People? What people?"

"Why, Kid Winfeld and Old Hal, his man-of-all work."

"Didn't know he had a man. However, I have nothing more to tell you now. Next time

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you want to work quietly and don't give those fellows time to hide their stuff."

"We followed your instructions to the letter. I think some one gave you a bad tip. Good day, sir."

"Umph!" grunted Blackstock in surly reply.

"What in hell did that damned Dutchman do with the booze?" he asked himself, as the officer disappeared, and then mumbled aloud, "well, that survey will bother him, I guess."

It is evident that it was not the Dutchman whom he intended to bother with the survey.

Hardly had The Kid recovered when he received a legal notice that O. L. Blackstock, acting for his undisclosed clients, claimed the ground upon which was situated his rich discovery. New lines and new corner posts backed up this claim. Winfeld immediately retained a lawyer to protect his interests. Blackstock succeeded in getting an injunction granted to prevent The Kid from doing further development work until after the courts had decided who really had title to the ground. Blackstock also claimed that Winfeld's title was no good because the claim had not been leased to a real person; that is, the claim stood in the name of K. E. Winfeld, which he held was not Winfeld's real name, as the initial "K" stood for "Kid", a nickname.

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"Who is retaining this man Blackstock, anyway, Mr. Winfeld?" asked The Kid's lawyer.

"I am not sure, Mr. Day, but I have my ideas upon the subject," answered The Kid seriously. "In the meantime just string these matters along. Don't press Blackstock at all, and let him think that I am somewhat embarrassed by all this legal trouble."

"Very well; I get you. But I would prefer that you have no negotiations with him of which you do not make me aware. It will save me, and perhaps you, time and trouble."

"Rest easy there, Mr. Day; I'll be careful."

The court had placed a guardian on The Kid's shaft, his expenses to be charged to the losing side of the pending lawsuit. Winfeld befriended this man and often gave him shelter in his cabin. They became very confidential. Then Winfeld got Mr. Robson to sample the shaft and prepare a report on the find. Robson became enthusiastic over the showing and with The Kid's consent showed it to the important mining interests for whom he was working. They made a handsome offer for the property, subject to The Kid's being able to clear his title.

Lawyer Day, acting for Winfeld, prepared a contract, which they all signed, agreeing to buy the property when the litigation was finished. Winfeld agreed to sell, but only on one

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very unusual condition; i.e., the contract was not to be recorded, and the agreement of sale must be kept absolutely secret until the title was cleared, or until The Kid consented to allow the matter to be made public.

In the meantime, Sergeant Woods, sore at the evident trick that Blackstock had tried to make him an innocent party to, had been doing some detective work. He met The Kid at the latter's rooms.

"I think Blackstock tried to put something over on you that miscarried," he informed Winfeld. "But I believe I can lay my hands on the guy that wrote that anonymous letter, and the man that got him to do it."

"Fine, Sergeant. You keep your eye on them, but don't pull anything until I tell you to."

"Righto! You say when you are ready."

"I'll tell you, never fear," Winfeld assured him. "But keep off until I do. And say, Sergeant, I am going on a trip. Mr. Day can keep you informed, and will represent me in my absence."

"Business, I suppose," suggested the policeman. "Well, good luck to you."

After they had shaken hands the Sergeant turned at the door. "I hope there are no hard feelings about that nasty night at your cabin, Mr. Winfeld?"

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"None. Forget it! So long!" And The Kid waved him a magnanimous adieu.

"'E's not so cocky as 'e were that night, sir, h'is 'e?" suggested Old Hal, a pleased look on his smug countenance.

"No, not quite, Old Flatfoot," his master smiled. "Things have changed."

"Yes sir. Thank you, sir," agreed the servant.

"And say, Hal, while I am gone you keep the dogs exercised. Drive them every day, rain or shine. Put Juno on the sled and keep changing the pups around until they work smoothly. Pinto will probably remain as the best lead dog."

"Yes, sir," acquiesced Hal. "Trust me, sir, I'll 'ave them h'in fine running h'order for you, sir, when you return, sir. Thank you, sir."

When The Kid boarded the train for Toronto the lake was frozen solid, and frequent snowsqualls had laid the muskeg of northern Ontario under a blanket of gleaming white.

• • • • •

Ames & Co. of Toledo was an up-and-coming brokerage house. Charles Ames was the moving spirit, and as his competitors said, "the whole darn works." Being naturally honest and young he was still struggling, but such clients as he made stuck to him. They liked his frankness and his methods. However, making noth-

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ing but straight commissions is a slow way to get rich, or accumulate enough to "carry" customers for such added emoluments as this kind of business brings in.

Charlie Ames had hardly seated himself at his desk one winter morning when a Mr. Trent was announced.

"Good morning, sir. What can I do for you?" he thus greeted Kid Winfeld, who was shamelessly masquerading under an alias.

The latter went straight to the point.

"What do you know of a mine in Porcupine called the Miracle, Mr. — er — ?"

"Ames," supplied Charlie smiling.

"Mr. Ames," added "Trent," bowing and seating himself in the proffered chair.

"Miracle?" repeated Ames. "Let me see. That's Taylor's baby. Well, ahem, that is,— first, may I ask who you are, and why you want the information?"

"I am nobody; just a small investor. I might want to buy some stock. Heard it was a right good property. Fellow down in the hotel was mentioning it."

This indeed had been the fact. Miracle was well known in Ohio. The Kid's expression was that of an ingenuous youth looking for a short road to wealth.

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"I dont like to knock anybody's game," ventured Ames deliberately, "but if Miracle is not good there will be a hell of a lot of women and orphans stung for their last sou!"

"How is that, Mister?" asked "Trent."

"Well, those Taylors are spiritualists, or at least have a bunch of people, who believe in those things, mightily interested, as well as a crowd of presumably wise guys. If the mine should turn out poorly, a lot of money would be lost, that is all. Why, they even took some of my women clients out of sound bonds and kidded them into buying that Miracle stuff."

"They did?" asked "Trent."

Then Ames told him nearly the whole story of Miracle: the Green sisters, the spiritualists, Mr. Sherman, and the rest. Artful questioning on "Trent's" part made the neat swindle as plain as a pike-staff.

"I should judge that the Taylors are not particular friends of yours?" he hazarded.

"Not so you would notice it! I hate fakirs and brokers that get people to go crazy over this mine stuff. Mines are all right for syndicates composed of rich men, and I even favor a little speculation in listed mining stocks for those who are satisfied to speculate with income; but when women begin to chuck in their principal, and men mortgage their homes to gamble

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in wildcat mining stock,—well, I'm in the brokerage game, but I don't want to make my living that way."

Ames' vehemence was most patently sincere.

"No, it's no game for the poor folks or the women," admitted "Trent."

"I would not advise you to buy that stuff," said Ames, sizing up The Kid's modest clothes and general appearance. "If you wish to buy something, how about a good bond? We have some good industrials, yielding seven per cent. that come in denominations of one hundred dollars and five hundred dollars; or some public utilities, yielding six, with practically no risk at all. How much do you want to invest?"

"Never mind your investments at the moment. We will do some business along those lines later. And before I go any further, please keep my name and this interview under your hat. Perhaps I do not wish as yet to tell you very much about my interest in this matter, but I do wish to retain you as my broker and advisor in stock matters. Just put my card in your files and sit tight and friendly."

For a card "Trent" flashed a thousand dollar bill under the nose of the astonished Charles Ames.

"Wha-what's that for?" he gasped, for this client had not looked like ready money.

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“You just put it to work in a savings account,” suggested “Trent,” “and in your name. When I come to settle up for services you have rendered me, deduct the amount of your bill and return me the balance. If I use up that much credit with you, there is more where that came from. Are you on?”

“Say, kid,” (Trent started at the familiar, if accidental, use of his “nickname”) “I hate to take it.”

“That’s all right. It’s business. You can give me a letter stating the terms and I’ll O.K. it.”

“Well, it’s a go, but you certainly must have a hen on to play the game this way.”

The letter was written, signed and filed, whereupon the two had a long and detailed conference. The shabby note signed “Dad” that Buck had dropped and Juno had retrieved for her master, interested Ames. That same afternoon “Trent” moved his things to a quiet boarding-house in a cheap part of the city. A day or two later a telephone was installed in his room,—to the scandal of an economical land-lady.

Within a week Buchanan Taylor, Sr., was having a conference with Buck.

“Who is fooling with Miracle?” inquired the older of the two schemers.

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"I don't know. That fellow Ames and some of those old standpatters and bond boys have been accumulating some options on the stock. I have not paid much attention to it; in fact, I think it rather a good thing to have in a little new blood. It is all under our control anyway. They are not getting any new stock from us."

"Umph!" grunted Taylor, Sr. "Is that Winfield feller that came to life so inopportunely still holding out as obstinately as ever?"

"Yep. Blackstock reports that he has him in a corner, and then again states that he has to build a new corner to drive him into. They say he has gone south somewhere."

"The cost of this lawing must be getting his goat. Perhaps he may come through at the price offered, but I would advise raising our price a bit."

"Don't do it," remonstrated Buck. "If we show a weakness the price will climb out of sight."

"But the property ought to be worth a hundred thousand or more to us, if it is as good as you say."

"Dad!" expostulated Buck heatedly. "That poor bastard couldn't *think* that much money. Why, he is just a camp loafer. Ten thousand dollars, net, to him should be our limit. When

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his lawyers get to hounding him for money hard enough, he'll be glad to accept our concession to pay all expenses and ten thousand dollars and quit his claim. It's a cinch!"

"Well, son, perhaps you are right," sighed the old man, and the matter dropped for the day.

CHAPTER XVI

THOUGH busy, The Kid was not a delinquent lover. He had his fears and hopes and disappointments regarding Miss Doris Sherman. He ascertained that she was in the city. Report had it, alas, that she was engaged to marry Buck Taylor, Jr. Convinced that she did not wish to renew her acquaintance with him, he did not care to make himself known, but gambler that he was, bided his time and played the game as well as he knew how, hoping for a lucky turn that would place him in a better position in her eyes.

He did not dwell upon his longings, nor his acute sufferings when he thought of her. Twice he saw her, and once he stood so close to her in a shop that he could hardly refrain from speaking.

On her part she still thought that he had lost his life in the fire. Buck had not enlightened her. The Kid had grown a heavy mustache as a matter of precaution, as of course he did not wish Buck to know he was in Toledo. This facial adornment (or shall it be said, with the average modern girl, disfigurement) and his "store" clothes had made an effectual disguise. However, the boy was sure she had seen him

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and had purposely avoided him. He clenched his fist and laid his plans, taking his spiritual chastisement in a fashion most manful.

When his plans reached a satisfactory stage he notified Ames to sit tight until he gave him further orders. Then he returned to Porcupine. There he had a most comforting interview with his lawyer. At that meeting Sergeant Woods was also present and placed certain facts and papers in Mr. Day's hands. These caused all three to smile.

"Now, not a word to a soul about this," warned The Kid. "We will keep quiet until just before the trial."

"Very good, sir," agreed the Sergeant, "but I want the satisfaction of getting these crooks when the time comes. Good day, gentlemen."

A proposed dog team race was at this time taking up the interest of the sporting element in Porcupine. After considerable bickering as to distances, rules and the soliciting of sufficient funds for prizes, the date was set. The legal battle between The Kid and the Taylors' and Miracle interests was set down for two days after the race.

The entries for the dog team contest were left open to all, and were not to be closed until forty-eight hours before the race. It was of

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course taken for granted that The Kid would be an entrant.

Some three weeks before the "dog Derby of the North" Buck Taylor appeared in town. He at once took a decided interest in the chief sporting event of the winter. Shortly after his advent it was rumored that The Kid had disposed of his team of great Danes. To make this rumor seem a fact he was seen a few days later practising with a team of mongrel huskies. They made a fairly good team, and though they did not show superiority over other entries, conjecture was rife as to their probabilities.

Buck, always on the lookout for a sure thing, asked advice from Dutchy Messer and other dog experts as to the merits of all the teams, and, in particular, which could be relied upon to win the race. Dutchy had to reluctantly admit that The Kid's team of huskies looked as good as any.

"If I could driff von of dem pig teams outer Cockrane,—dann,—donnerwetter!" he spluttered confidently in Buck's ear.

The said ear pricked up at these gutteral words.

"You think you could buy a team at Cockrane to beat him, eh?" he asked contemplatively.

"Sure ting!" responded the miner quickly. "But'd cost heluva lot of money."

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“How much?”

“Maybe one thousand dollar,” offered Dutchy promptly.

“Sure they’d win this race?”

“Chust as easy as—dat,” said the other, making a motion with his hands as if brushing all obstacles aside.

“You buy ‘em,” ordered Buck. “Deliver ‘em here and drive ‘em yourself. The money will be ready when the dogs are delivered. But don’t show ‘em round camp until just before the race.”

“I git yer. But you giff me von hunderd dollar to bind de bargin, or nuddins doin’.”

Buck took a chance. Dutchy was gone hardly a week when he returned with a beautiful team of young and well trained animals. These he exercised and cared for, using the old squaw’s isolated camp as his base of operations. After Buck had seen the team perform he was convinced that they were far superior to those The Kid drove. He took occasion to throw an insulting slur or two at Winfeld’s chances in the race. These unkind words were carried speedily to their objective. The latter young man deliberately refused to notice them. Ignored by The Kid, Buck took the trouble to call him a quitter and yellow,—behind his back. As these insults were at first contemptuously unnoticed,

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he worked himself up into quite an incautious frame of mind. He dared to cast an aspersion upon The Kid's sporting blood within his hearing. This occurred in the lobby of the new King George Hotel. Half a hundred miners were present. Winfeld walked over to Taylor when he heard the remark.

"Look, Taylor," he said, "this is a dog team race for prizes. It is not stock gambling, or horse racing. But if you want to bet, may I inquire just how you would like to do it?"

"O, real money, of course. What did you think? Candy?" Taylor sneered the "candy" in a most offensive way.

"How much real money?" The Kid appeared to be furious and reckless.

"O, a thousand or so," replied the other, in a lofty manner. "Or if you can't raise that much, any bet down to fifty samoleons."

The crowd gasped and then laughed.

"You're bluffing," slurred The Kid. "You are just a great big fat, noisy boob, and you wouldn't bet real money that fifty-two cards made a deck!"

Taylor turned white. The crowd edged closer.

"By God! I'll not take that from you or any one else," Buck swore. He started toward his tormentor with a face of fury and fists upraised.

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Two men grabbed him. Winfeld stood and watched him coolly and as insolently as possible.

“Let me go!” frothed Buck. “I’ll kill him!” He was nearly crying in his rage.

Then The Kid’s voice rang out clearly above the din of the excited lobby.

“I’ll wager you five thousand dollars that my team will out run any team that you back in this here dog race!”

“Done!” screamed Buck, jerking away from the restraining arms of his friends.

The details were quickly arranged and the money was posted in the hands of one of the bank managers at ten o’clock the next morning. That Kid Winfeld may have strained his resources to find that much cash was a common conjecture in the camp, but he found the money and posted it as agreed. His gold “brick” cached for emergencies, may have been useful at this time. Buck was a bit tardy getting his together as he had to have credit wired from Toledo. Although he had been jockeyed into betting a far larger sum than he had intended (through the adroit manœuvring of the wily Kid), he made the best of it and appeared as friendly as possible whenever he and his antagonist happened to meet. Believing it good policy to make these advances, in view of what he intended doing to his rival, he even went so far as to suggest

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that Winfeld join a poker party he was giving one evening.

The Kid noted that the proposed party was to be made up of three wealthy mining brokers and one semi-professional gambler in addition to the host. For a moment he was sorely tempted to "sit in." Taylor and his guests would have been the easiest kind of plucking for the young card expert. There was no doubt, in The Kid's mind, that the presence of the gambler above mentioned, portended a frame-up. He knew Buck well enough to believe that he hired the gambler to win for him. Having previously watched the man play, Winfeld knew of his narrow limitations. He would have been a mere neophyte in The Kid's school. The latter had no moral compunctions about tricking money out of tricksters and it would have been most convenient at this time to have won a few thousand dollars, just in case things did not go as expected. So he hesitated—until an image of his mother's face intruded;—also something Doris had said about gambling not being respectable returned to him. . . . His fingers fairly itched for the cards . . . ; he craved the excitement of high play! He longed to teach these crooks a lesson . . . but he shook his head.

At least twenty people had heard Buck's over

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cordial invitation, and twenty pairs of ears strained to register The Kid's reply.

"Thank you, no, Taylor," he said politely. "I never, under any circumstances, play cards, or any other gambling game, for money."

"What!" exclaimed Buck, a sneer and at the same time doubt in his voice. "Don't play for money! Quit your kiddin'. Why everybody in Porcupine knows that you are a gambler and even run a no-limit black-jack game in your rooms."

"You are mistaken, Taylor," denied Winfeld. "I have let the boys play 'twenty-one' in my room, as they would in any club-room, and pay rent for same out of a 'kitty,' but you cannot find a man in the north country who can truly say I ever played a card here for money."

"O, come now,—I say,—" began Buck.

"Ask any one here," demanded The Kid.

"He's right." "No, he never gambles himself." "I've played in his rooms lots of times, but never seen him touch a card." Such were the expressions that were hurled at Buck Taylor's astonished head.

Knowing young Winfeld's forebears he had taken it for granted that he gambled as his father had done before him. The evidence that he did not was too public and vociferous to be denied. He excused himself for his mistake and

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with some disappointment joined his acquaintances.

A week before the dog derby The Kid had a brush with one of the other dog teams and was nosed out in a sprint. Buck happened to see this performance and could hardly suppress a grin.

"If he can't beat those dub dogs what chance will he have against my new team with Dutchy driving?" he laughed to himself, as he heard The Kid cursing his dogs and making excuses to the bystanders.

"I'll bet another thousand," he boasted, "and give odds that Winfeld will get trimmed."

The latter left the ice (they had been running the dogs on Porcupine Lake) in a very quiet and crestfallen manner.

"He's beat a'ready," ventured one onlooker.

"I aint so damned sure," said another, with a bold wish for a miracle or something that might favor The Kid whom he admired.

The following day Old Hal appeared driving The Kid's huskies, and it was reported that their master was not feeling well. That same morning One Leg Blackstock received a telephone message from Kid Winfeld's lawyer, Charles Day. Blackstock was delighted to learn that Winfeld was discouraged at the expense of the lawsuit and was ready to talk settlement. At

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Day's invitation he went at once to the former's pleasant office.

"I am instructed to say that my client would consider an offer of ten thousand dollars, plus my fees and other disbursements made in his behalf, provided of course that you call all suits off," offered Day gravely.

Old One Leg could hardly refrain from rubbing his hands in his delight. He felt all puffed up over what he now considered the result of his personal astuteness in handling the matter. Day went on to express his opinion of conditions influencing his unfortunate client.

"You see he got into this darn dog race a lot deeper than he intended, and now he finds that his team is not as good as he hoped when he made that reckless bet of five thousand dollars. He stands to lose that, and if he should lose out in this lawsuit, why he would be in a pretty bad fix. So I advised him to consider your offer, though, mind you," here he shook his head warningly, "I believe that I can beat you guys to a frazzle on every count, if I carry this far enough; and that is what I am going to do, client or no client, if you chaps don't meet my fees and disbursements to date, in addition to Winfeld's ten thousand."

No one knew better than One Leg Blackstock that Charles Day had not only a good case, but

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plenty of money and courage to carry it to the Privy Council in England, if he felt like it.

“I’ll see my client at once, and will let you know,” One Leg assured Day, and hurried out.

He found Buck in the hotel.

“Well, Mr. Taylor,” he puffed pompously, “we win! Winfeld wants to settle and sell his claim.”

Buck’s eyes lighted up. Then suppressing any pleasure lest his lawyer take too much expensive credit for this lucky turn of affairs, he asked about the terms. When One Leg told him, glibly enough to be sure, he shook his head.

“Nothing doing!” he emphatically declared. “We’ve got ‘em on the run. You go back and tell Day that Winfeld will have to pay his own expenses out of his ten thousand.”

“But—,” began One Leg protestingly.

“You do as I say,” ordered Buck. “Drive the hardest bargain that you can and keep them guessing. Where is Winfeld?”

“Day says that he is laid up.”

“Humph! Scared to face the race or the law-suit, and afraid to stick around and do his own bargaining. Well, we’ll show him how to break a gambler’s heart!” thus boasted Buck to the anxious and crooked man of law, as he directed him on his way to complete the annihilation of Winfeld.

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Then he sent off two code telegrams, as follows:

Porcupine, Ontario.
Date.

“Buchanan Taylor, Toledo, Ohio.

K.W. has quit. Will settle my price and terms. Told you so. Buy before news gets out.
Buck.”

When Buck's father received this he acted upon it promptly. First, he had published in the papers that the Miracle Mine had proved a disappointment; then he bought every share of Miracle that he could coax out of the hands of his clients, and at the lowest price he could get it for. He was surprised to find that two-thirds of these people had optioned their stock at cost price to Ames & Co. Cajole or threaten as he would, that gentleman seemed to like Miracle stock. He coolly asked Mr. Taylor just about double what it had originally been sold for.

“The damned young robber!” moaned Taylor Sr., as acting on a confirming letter from his son, he sent a certified check over to Ames for several hundred thousand dollars. “But it is worth it,” he comforted himself, as he dwelt upon the terms of settlement and the immense popularity of Miracle stock when the mine would begin to pay dividends.

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The second code telegram sent by Buck read as follows:

Porcupine, Ontario.
Date.

"Miss Doris Sherman, Toledo, Ohio.

Big dog team race here next week. Come up and see it. Also, have purchased Winfeld property. Hurry. Love.

Buchanan."

This wire was handed to Doris when she was terribly lonesome and downhearted. Winfeld's name, mentioned in the telegram, brought up a rush of memories. That he was still alive never occurred to her. It was most natural that his claim should carry his name. She had her maid get together all her furs and mackinaw sport clothes, and forthwith set out at once for Toronto.

Buck's plan was to make the most of his victory over his humiliated antagonist. That was his nature. He felt sure of winning the dog team race. That meant satisfaction plus money. He knew that The Kid could not afford to lose five thousand dollars. All the better. He was certain that he had defeated Winfeld in the legal negotiations, and had, at last, succeeded in jockeying him out of his property at a bargain price. That meant money plus satisfaction. He had certainly won Doris in spite of Winfeld's

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impudent pick-up acquaintance with her, which is the way Buck put it to his cronies. He justified himself for parading his lady before his unsuccessful rival, by giving that lady an opportunity to see the further pretensions of this camp waif crumble before the superior astuteness of her wise choice in husbands. He did not intend to allow The Kid an opportunity to again become familiar with Doris.

Dwelling upon the favorable maturity of all these plans, Buchanan Taylor, Jr. could not but wear a contented smile as he mingled with the men crowding into Porcupine for the race, and to attend the so-called spring session of the county court. The weather was beautiful, it being late March. The days were getting longer, and, except for an occasional sudden snow-squall, the sun shone most of the lengthening day. Foggy or grey days were almost unknown at that time of the year. It was for this reason as well as to cater to the transient attendance upon impending legal battles that the race was held at this season.

The only fly in Buck's ointment of self-satisfaction was his legal advisor's impatience to get Winfeld's signature affixed to the documents that would transfer his claim. Then, and not until then, could Blackstock collect the substantial fees he had marked up against his

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wealthy client. Old One Leg was most anxious to be free to boast of his prowess as a man of law and as an adept solicitor. Publicity was what he needed in his business. It would bring him more clients. But Buck was not quite ready for publicity. He instructed Blackstock to go slow. This would give B. Taylor, Sr., time to buy up every share available of Miracle stock. Buck well knew that the minute the transfer of property was recorded it would appear in the papers and be copied in Toledo. Miracle stock would then soar in price and become impossible to buy except at very high figure.

The day before the race he received a letter from his father who admitted that he had paid a long price for the stock Ames controlled. Buck concluded something must have leaked out. Then he did a little figuring and concluded that even at the amount paid Ames, Miracle stock had not averaged an unreasonable price to them in view of the acquisition of Winfield's property for so small a sum.

"It is practically getting the claim for nothing," he chortled to Blackstock.

The lawyer nodded and mentally added another five hundred to his charge for services.

From the foregoing it is easy to deduce the fact that neither Winfield nor Buck had tried

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to push the deal to a conclusion. And both men, it appears, were equally content with the delay.

Doris arrived the night before the race. Taylor greeted her as became a successful suitor and man of affairs. The old lady whom she had brought with her as chaperone kept decently in the background.

CHAPTER XVII

THE day of the race was perfect as to weather and track conditions. It was to be a ten mile stretch from South Porcupine to Timmins and return. Five teams were entered, and five dogs were driven to the team, —tandem fashion. The rules called for a load of one hundred and fifty pounds to a sled. A driver had the choice of loading up with dead or live weight and handling the dogs from behind, running or riding on the runners; or he could sit upon the sled himself and undertake to handle his team that way, providing of course his team was well trained and strong enough to pull their load unassisted up the slopes.

There was a gasp of astonishment when Dutchy appeared at the starting line driving a splendid team of huskies that had never before been noticed in the district. Word soon got round that it was Buck Taylor's entry. It was generally conceded that he had put one over on Kid Winfeld, as well as the rest of the contestants.

The Kid had entered the names of his dogs and himself as driver. He did this just before the entries closed. No one had taken particular notice of the names of his dogs.

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Four teams were at the starting line and waiting for the fifth,—Winfeld's, to put in an appearance. The crowd got impatient. Buck was strutting around and doing a great deal of talking.

“I guess he is not so very anxious to be in this race,” he loudly sneered.

Doris had overslept and also was late for the start. This gave Buck just the opportunity he wished, for bragging and sneering. Suddenly there was a murmur from the hurrying crowd back along the trail leading to the starting line. This murmur grew to a roar, then loud cheers, as a team of five great Blue Danes swung up to the track.

“The Winfeld entry!” the starter shouted, with a note of but poorly concealed exultation in his voice.

“Hurrah! Hooray!” “O, you Kid!” yelled the excited spectators.

There was hardly a man in the throng who had not heard of The Kid's large bet. Up to this dramatic moment they had believed him a beaten, nervy boy. But behold! a miracle must have happened. No one could deny that with his sudden advent behind his team of enormous and well trained Danes he had a sporting chance with any team in Ontario. Buck was dumfounded. In characteristic fashion he at once

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protested that The Kid had entered with a "ringer."

"No such thing," denied the committee, scanning the entry sheets. "He entered these dogs under their regular names and within the time limit. Every man in Porcupine knows these dogs by name."

Buck protested in vain. The teams whirled into position; the pistol cracked, and away they flew!

Dutchy had elected to "mush" his dogs from behind. As there was a long gentle slope over part of the trail he could ride while the dogs ran at full speed. On the return he intended to run behind and help push the sled through the newly fallen snow covering the hard track beneath. Dutchy, it must be conceded, with all his faults, was a powerful and swift runner, and a real expert when it came to handling harnessed dogs.

From the start it was a race between Winfeld and Dutchy. They took the lead and kept it. The great Danes loped easily and without much apparent effort beside the team of straining huskies. Juno was on the sled and the young spotted bitch, Pinto, was in the lead. The Kid had difficulty in keeping his excited team from tearing right away from their shorter limbed rivals. Well he knew that those blue-

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blooded huskies, with all their apparent straining, were capable of chopping their way through soft snow at a rapid pace for hour after hour. Not that he was afraid of the staying power of his own dogs, but he knew that being young they had not the heart nor the sinews of seasoned performers.

Juno herself seemed to know just the measure of effort that the team should put forth. She assisted her master materially in keeping the over anxious pups from running away.

They came to a hill and Dutchy ran behind his sled, pushing it with a powerful but steady hand. His team slackened its pace but little as it faced the rising ground. It was here that he drew gradually ahead. Under the rules The Kid could not get off and run, as he had chosen to weigh in as the stipulated one hundred and fifty pounds of "live" ballast for his sled. . . .

They reached the turning point at Timmins and swept round the block designated in good style,—all teams strung out but quite near together. Dutchy turned first; then The Kid's great Danes swept around; then in one, two, three order, the other contenders.

Dutchy now started his drive to shake off the persistently following Kid. He realized that if he did not tire the Danes and get a good lead before the final sprint that his chances of win-

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ning would be slim. And Taylor had promised him one thousand dollars if he did win. However, he knew that no huskie dog that ever was bred could sprint on equal terms with a long legged Dane, unless such a dangerous competitor had been well blown first. Hence he used every art known to the dog driving fraternity to assist his willing animals. He demanded of them every ounce of energy in their sinewy bodies.

At the half-way mark the Danes were still sticking to his flying heels. Dutchy cracked his whip and cried his dogs on. He looked back and fancied that he was gaining. The teams swept on in a cloud of swirling snow. In the fast setting sun men and beasts looked like animated snow-images.

As they hove in sight of the finish, hardly a quarter of a mile away, The Kid could hear the welcoming murmurs of the distant throng. So could Dutchy, leading by some twenty yards!

When Doris had joined the crowd, breathless from her sprint to be on time, the teams had just crossed the starting line. She looked like a glorified white Esquimau princess in her furs and leggings. Her laughing eyes and flowery complexion gleamed from their frame of frosted black fox fur. She made a picture so enthusias-

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tically beautiful that the spectators stared at her in the sheer pleasure of her radiating loveliness.

She heard Winfeld's name mentioned and sighed. She heard it again and could not believe her ears. Then she put the thought away from her. It could not be any one whom she had been interested in. Taylor took charge of her. She had not the courage to ask if the name she had heard was that of a relative of "her miner" who had perished in the fire. She kept overhearing scraps of conversation in which his name was mentioned. Something terrible seemed about to happen. She had a premonition that she could neither analyse nor define. She walked about with Buck as if in a dream. There was no doubt that the young gentleman was worried and most abstracted when she tried to make conversation. He stalked about, turning unexpectedly, snapping his fingers and cursing under his breath.

When the teams came in sight it was soon discovered that Dutchy and his huskies were ahead.

"Messer leads!" yelled the crowd, field glasses coming into play.

"The Danes are pulling up!" bawled another excited voice, its owner beginning a grotesque Highland fling with its furred legs.

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“Neck and neck!” yelled another.

Then a great cry went up from all sides. The Danes had swung sharply to one side and their sled had capsized. The huskies were again in the lead.

“He’s righted again,” a tense voice announced.

The Kid’s team had straightened away, and with its sled right side up and its driver kneeling upon it they were running like scared wolves. As if shot from a cannon those great greyish-white shapes skimmed the ground. They closed the gap between them and the sled ahead. They breasted and passed it. Dutchy was cursing and cruelizing his over-strained dogs unmercifully. His whip bit deep through their furry coats and drew blood at every stroke. It was no use. The Danes were by him like wind-blown ghosts, their driver a silent and kneeling statue.

The Kid swept across the line, the winner by yards!

The Danes stood quietly at his command like the well disciplined animals they were.

Dutchy was second. His dogs dropped in their tracks, the sled dog, too tired to resent the surly kick he gave it in his chagrin.

As The Kid stepped from his sled he stood up—facing Doris Sherman. . . . His eyes nearly popped out of his head.

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"Kid!" she ejaculated involuntarily. Her face was white.

"Yes, Miss Doris," said the young man simply. "Aren't you going to congratulate me?"

Some of the people, anxious to shake hands with the winner, crowded around, but sensed a dramatic situation. They kept at a respectful distance. Other teams were only now finishing. The interest was divided. Buck stood and glowered beside his lady. Dutchy walked over to him, sputtering excuses. As he drew near he saw Doris. The effect would have been ludicrous if it had not been pathetic.

"Gott!" he prayed, and threw his arm over his eyes. He looked again and then dropped to his knees. In German he gargled out a jargon of expletives or prayers which no one understood.

"Sergeant Woods," ordered The Kid in quick command, "arrest that man! I charge him with arson and attempted murder."

That officer and a constable took Dutchy promptly into custody. They had to half carry the weak-kneed rascal to the local lock-up. It was all so sudden that but a small part of the spectators saw the action or knew what happened.

Buck's thousand dollar team was taken in

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hand by good hearted onlookers. That the dogs were done for was the general opinion.

“That dirty Dutchy broke their hearts! Why, they are bleeding all over!”

They led the poor animals away for such attention as dogs get in the north.

And all this while Doris was standing stock still, her mind in a tumult of readjustment. As The Kid turned again towards her he remarked, “That is Messer,—the rascal who nailed you up in my cabin and then set the brush afire the day that Juno and I carried you to the lake. He thought that you were dead. Just now the unexpected sight of you nearly paralysed him with fright. We had suspected him but had had no proof. It is a good thing that you came up to see the race. I hope you enjoyed it.”

Doris’ face was a picture of surprise and consternation.

“Juno—you—Messer—?” she stammered. “Why, I thought,—that is, I understood—” . . .

Just here Buck butted in. “Come, Doris,” he ordered her preemptorily, “we had better go to the hotel,” and he led her unresisting away.

“Sorry to have to trim you,” called The Kid after him, “but that Dutchy Messer is a poor tool to place dependence upon. So long, Miss Doris.”

But she didn’t answer. Nor did the fluent

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explanation of The Kid's revelation, that Buck was giving her, as they walked away, make any impression upon her. She was so dazed by these events that she retired to her room.

The throng in the lobby of the hotel was hilarious. The prizes for the "dog Derby" were being handed out amid much speech making and hilarity. Bets were being paid and rough banter prevailed. Doris came out of her room and stood upon the stair-landing with her duenna and watched the fun. She was in time to hear three rousing cheers given to Kid Winfeld as they handed him first money. Then upon request he made a brief speech of thanks from the vantage point of the desk. Just before he got down the stakeholder presented him with a certified check for ten thousand dollars. There was another wild demonstration. Doris was shocked to hear Buck Taylor's name and reputation paraded in no friendly fashion.

"And wait till the lawsuit!" someone gloated. "He'll get it in the neck again!"

"Hooray!" acquiesced the excited enthusiasts.

To all intents and purposes, Kid Winfeld, whom Buck had called a low down gambler and camp waif, seemed to be the most popular man in Porcupine. At any rate that is the way it appeared to Miss Sherman. He saw her and bowed. She blushed and could not but return

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his salute. The crowd saw it too and set up such a cheer as would have warmed the heart of a reigning princess. They read more into that exchange of courtesies than perhaps the incident warranted; but then crowds are psychic, as actors and orators know,—and perhaps authors.

As the noise grew apace Doris withdrew, her heart in a tumult, and her head “absolutely unreasonable.”

“But he was the handsomest Thing, standing there!” she breathed to her cosy pillow, as she lay in her bed, too excited to sleep.

Before he could get away from the crowd The Kid had to tell what caused his team to swerve and upset the sled in the race. When they heard that Dutchy Messer had deliberately struck Juno across the head with the lash of his snake whip as The Kid’s team swung past, they were all for lynching Messer. A few words from Sergeant Woods greeted them at this juncture. He suggested that they would do better to *watch* the law take its course.

Buck had thought it a good time to consult with his lawyer. The former had not been much in evidence during the evening festivities.

“Close the deal before court opens in the morning,” was the final order he gave Blackstock that night, to that gentleman’s infinite relief.

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Buck retired in a very nasty humor. He would perhaps not have slept at all if he could have seen a code telegram The Kid was perusing in his apartment at that hour. It ran,

Toledo, Ohio.

March 20, 19..

“K. E. Winfeld, Porcupine, Ontario.

Old man has bought all of ours and nearly all the balance. Better spring it. Have the goods on him for misrepresentation and fraud. Ames.”

Under her door the next morning Doris found a note from The Kid. It suggested her presence in the court room “to hear the evidence in the case of Taylor versus Winfeld.”

At nine o'clock Blackstock and Buck appeared at Charles Day's office and there met Winfeld.

“Well, gentlemen, we are ready to close,” purred Blackstock obsequiously to Mr. Day and The Kid.

Buck began to tap the desk nervously.

“Close what?” asked Mr. Day coolly.

“Why, take over Mr. Winfeld's claim: close our option on it,” offered One Leg graciously, a gleam of surprise in his eye.

“Let us see your option,” said The Kid.

“Why, it is not a formal option; I mean to say, that we will buy the claim as agreed.”

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“As who agreed?” asked Day.

“As *we* agreed,” snapped Buck, impatient at this useless sparring.

“It takes two to make an agreement, Buck Taylor,” remarked The Kid. “We didn’t agree to anything. You offered a measly little old ten thousand dollars for my claim, and then tried to modify it by all sorts of conditions. As I say, we did not, nor will we, agree to your price or terms.”

One Leg and Buck looked dumfounded.

“What is your price?” asked Buck thickly.

“Haven’t any,” barked The Kid,—“for you.”

“I’ll give you fifty thousand,” offered Buck, convinced that he had better play a large enough trump card to take the trick, and realizing as well, down deep, that matters were getting awkward for the Miracle interests.

“Nothing doing!” replied Winfeld.

“Seventy-five,—one hundred thousand dollars,” he offered.

Blackstock was licking his dry lips. Even the nervy Day’s face had turned a shade lighter.

“No!” said The Kid emphatically.

“One hundred and fifty thousand dollars.”

“No!”

Buck was desperate. Both lawyers were aghast at Winfeld’s refusal.

“Two hundred thousand dollars. That’s my

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limit. Take it or leave it!" Buck was wondering how he and his father were going to raise the money, knowing that the old man had spent all their profits in buying back *Miracle* stock.

"Not if you make it a million," smiled The Kid. "Taylor money can not buy a Winfeld mine, not if I know it. Now beat it!"

No amount of argument could change this decision.

"I'll chase you through every court in Canada and take you to the Privy Council in England," stormed Buck, "before I'll quit, you,—you gambler's spawn,—you damned camp follower!"

Instead of physically resenting these insults The Kid just smiled.

Buck and the now shaky Blackstock left the office.

"On with the dance!" laughed Winfeld. "Perhaps when he hears from his old man he won't be so anxious to fight in the courts."

Within the hour the case of Winfeld and Taylor was called. It was to be tried before a jury. Among others in the audience was Miss Sherman.

The case ran somewhat like this, in brief: Taylor, the plaintiff, through Blackstock, claimed that corrected surveys threw the Win-

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feld discovery upon Miracle ground. He also claimed title through prior staking of the ground, Blackstock holding that The Kid's staking and recording were illegal, since there did not legally exist a person named Kid E. Winfeld, Kid being a nickname. He claimed, beside, that The Kid being illegitimate, and having no legitimate name, had no legal status in Ontario, and no right to own a mining property staked in a name other than his own. Blackstock, further, asked leave of the court to amend his claims and included a demand for damages, maintaining that The Kid had broken a verbal contract to sell;—and other less important claims. It all sounded very formidable to Doris, and indeed, to young Winfeld. Charlie Day, however, sat with a most sardonic grin upon his face.

“Let them ramble on,” was all the comfort that he vouchsafed his client.

Buck was put on the stand. He made a good plausible witness until Lawyer Day took him in hand in cross-examination. Such of his evidence as was, in Day's opinion, relevant was badly riddled under the lawyer's astute attacks. Among other things Buck admitted that he and his father had sold hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of Miracle stock before a pick had been put in the ground. He admitted that

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Dutchy Messer had told him of the rich find. He even admitted taking rich samples from the shaft himself. He was led into stating that he had no use for "the gambler" Winfeld, and told what he knew of his early life in Goldfield. Then he told how he had offered, without prejudice, of course, two hundred thousand dollars for The Kid's claim. With or without prejudice it made the same impression upon the jury.

"Who owns most of the Miracle stock now?" asked Day ingratiatingly.

"I guess we do, father and I."

"You are a broker and stock gambler?"

"Yes sir."

"You play poker sometimes for money?"

"Sometimes," smiled Buck.

Objections were raised to many of these questions by the frantic Blackstock, but Day usually got them answered and gained his point with the jury, whether the court sustained the objections or not. As a good lawyer he knew that even asking a question made its impression upon a jury, and whether answered or not, the jury-men would be carried along the same lines of thought. In short, Buck made a poor witness for his own side. Day waved him contemptuously aside after getting him so tangled up that he was red in the face.

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The Kid was now put on the stand and answered all questions clearly and satisfactorily.

After his testimony Blackstock called the surveyor who had been hired to run the new lines. Day did not bother to cross-examine him. To the surprise of the plaintiffs, and in fact everyone else, Day then called as witness the Crown Land surveyor, who had run the original lines of The Kid's property. As this man had been reported dead, a victim of the great fire, his resurrection was a real sensation.

Day had located him in the convalescent ward of a Toronto hospital. A bad scar on his face had made him unrecognizable to the casual glance of even his friends. He showed his original surveys and testified to certain "tie lines" and government "monuments" in a way entirely incontrovertible to a jury of mining men.

Blackstock scored technically once or twice and made some fine points of law, but these did not affect the rights of the case in the minds of the jurymen.

After the surveyors for both plaintiff and defendant had testified came the surprise of the morning. Mr. Day at the opening of the proceedings had asked the Court to allow the testimony of the defendant as to his name, birth-place, parents and profession to stand over until

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certain documents and witnesses could be produced, claiming that they were coming up on the Cobalt train. The Court had good naturally agreed, scarcely listening to the vociferous objections of Buck's lawyer.

Two men, in the meantime, had quietly slipped into the court-room. The Kid was again called to the stand. He testified that he was born in Reno, Nevada, and gave the date. He said that his name was Kid Edwin Winfeld, that of his father, George Winfeld, and that of his mother, Mary.

"Mary what?" asked Mr. Day gently.

"Mary Jordan Winfeld," replied The Kid in a low voice, but holding his head proudly erect.

There was a sneer on Buck Taylor's face. He whispered coarsely to One Leg Blackstock, who grinned an evil grin, biding his time against that delicious moment when under cross-examination he was going to make The Kid admit something about that mother of his, and then drag another scandal before the public gaze.

"Were you ever christened?"

"Yes sir."

Buck started.

"Where?"

"In Reno when I was four years old."

"You remember it?"

"Yes sir."

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“Who did it?”

“Father O’Toole, a Catholic priest.”

Blackstock and Buck both looked uneasy. Doris was leaning forward in her chair, lips parted and her soul in her eyes as she watched and listened.

“Are you a professional gambler?” asked Day, without preamble.

“No sir. I have not played a card for money, or other gambling game since my mother died. She asked me not to just before the last. Since I have been here some of the boys have played black-jack in my room. They used it as a sort of club and paid me for the use of it out of the ‘kitty.’ ”

There were men sitting right in the jury box who had played in that very room.

“What is your occupation?”

“I am a miner and claim owner now. I have been a time-keeper and book-keeper, and have held other small positions.”

“Did you ever know the date of your parents’ marriage?”

“I object,” screamed Blackstock.

“Sustained,” ruled the Court.

“Yes sir,” said The Kid.

“Strike that answer off the records,” ordered the Court, a peculiar light in his eye.

“Do you know the priest or minister who per-

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formed the ceremony?" asked Day.

"Yes sir," Winfeld quickly answered.

"I object," wailed Blackstock. "How could he know who did it? It is an irrelevant question anyway."

"Objection sustained," ruled the Judge, a lurking smile beneath his mustache.

"Did you ever hear your parents say who married them? And did you ever meet the priest or minister?"

"Yes sir," snapped The Kid.

"Object!" yelled Blackstock.

"Overruled," stated the Judge, and continued, "the defendant's legitimacy is questioned, and he stands to lose property if the plaintiff can prove his case and make the courts of Canada see his point. The witness has a right to reply to any question bearing upon the subject that he is qualified to answer. Proceed!"

"What was his name?" then went on Day.

"Father O'Toole, the same one who christened me."

"Have you seen him lately?"

"Yes sir. He is sitting right over there." The Kid pointed to a smiling old priest who arose and bowed to the court.

No one appeared to be scandalized at this informality, except Blackstock and Buck.

"This is outrageous!" complained Black-

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stock, hurling a torrent of objections at the Judge's head.

"Take the witness," laughed Day to Blackstock.

The latter gained little ground with the jury in his cross-examination, and brought out only that The Kid's father was a gambler. He dared not attack the mother's moral standing, though his client urged him to do it. He knew it would make no hit with a jury of miners to attack a dead woman's good name. Otherwise The Kid's testimony stood as given, except that Blackstock demanded legal proof of The Kid's claims. He got them aplenty!

The priest was called. His identification of the defendant was added to by that of the two old Nevada miners who had worked in The Kid's claim. A representative of the local Catholic organization identified the priest. An old chap who had been the town clerk in Reno was called. He was the issuer of licenses. The priest and the miners identified him. The priest testified to christening "Kid" as the name had been given.

The Court adjoined for lunch. Doris avoided Buck and hurried alone to the hotel. The new witnesses were greeted as long lost friends by Kid, and a jolly lunch was partaken of by

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them at Mr. Day's house. Sergeant Woods called while they were merrily talking together.

"Messer has confessed to burning your cabin," he announced to Day and Kid. "He also swears that that old hellion, Blackstock, hired him to put the liquor in Mr. Winfeld's cabin the night of the raid. He says that he got thirsty and stole it away again sometime after our first visit and before our second."

"This will be the last straw," laughed Day. "Notify Blackstock to come over here."

"I'll arrest him out of hand, if you'll let me,—the old skunk!" urged the irate Sergeant.

"Not yet,—don't. Send him here."

In a few minutes Old One Leg appeared, still hoping for a settlement. In five minutes he had departed and was in conference with his client. That afternoon the suit against Winfeld was withdrawn. The same night One Leg Blackstock disappeared. He never returned to Porcupine.

During the noon recess Buck had received a wire from his father, in answer to one from himself requesting instructions. It had read,

"Drop all legal proceedings. Return at once. Serious.

B. Taylor, Sr."

CHAPTER XVIII

THAT night Winfeld received another telegram. Decoded it read,
"Have cleared a profit of \$240,000. Can have Taylors indicted if you wish to press the case. Plenty of witnesses.

Ames."

Kid wired back in plain English:

"Case against me dropped. Miracle people cannot get my claim. Have sold to Dome Company. Notify papers. Good boy! Expect to be down soon. Hold up action against Taylors.

Trent."

Then Kid Winfeld sought Doris. She was in the upper hall of the hotel. He found Buck Taylor talking earnestly to that young lady. Buck jumped up and tried to greet Kid effusively.

"Well, you licked us, and particularly me," he admitted magnanimously. "But I have saved something out of the wreck. Let me announce that Miss Sherman and I are engaged to be married."

"I do not know whether to congratulate you or not, Miss Doris," said Kid, turning to her for confirmation.

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“O, not yet, please,” she hesitated, blushing. “Mr. Taylor knows that it is not really settled; that is, not definitely.”

“I see,” hesitated Winfeld, looking from one to the other.

“You see it is like this, Mr.—Kid,” she stammered, blushing more than before, “Buchanan says that he rescued me from your cabin, yet you spoke on the day of the race as though you had.”

“O, I say,” interrupted Buck uneasily, “I am not boasting about it. You see an awful day like that,—eh, anything———”

“That is all right, Taylor. Don’t try to explain. Let’s forget it. The important thing about the matter is that she was rescued.”

Buck looked relieved, and so perhaps did Doris. Kid then went on,

“As you people will likely be pulling out in the morning, and as I have made quite a winning to-day, I’d like to put on a little supper party for you tonight.”

“We shall be delighted,” accepted Doris graciously.

“Of course,” agreed Buck.

The supper was laid in a private room of the hotel. As guests Kid had invited the Stewarts of Golden City. Their son, the young doctor who had attended Doris the day of the fire, was also among those present, together with

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Doris' duenna and Juno, the great Dane. Doris and Buck were the guests of honor.

The Stewarts were delighted to meet the attractive young lady from Toledo once again. They had known for months that it had been Kid Winfeld who had saved her life. The presence of Juno as her guard on the beach the night they had carried her to their house had identified her rescuer, after the smoke and excitement had cleared away.

The details of the rescue Kid had never told except to Old Hal. The latter had gossiped with the Stewart's maid, and she in turn had told her mistress. But after all it had been but one of hundreds of other harrowing experiences and had not been thought much about in the family. Men were expected to rescue women under such circumstances.

As the supper progressed the conversation drifted to the subject of the dreadful catastrophe. Buck shifted nervously in his chair. Old Juno persisted in keeping her head in Doris' lap. Mrs. Stewart told her how the great dog had been found so faithfully guarding her on the beach while its exhausted master had gone for help.

"I don't wonder that you love her," she gushed to Doris. "She must have carried you on her back for miles!"

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"Carried me?" ejaculated the girl wide-eyed.

"Surely. Didn't Mr. Winfeld ever tell you? Why, at least three people caught sight of you coming through the smoke, and told us about it. They say that Juno was walking along with you on her back just as easily as anything."

This gossip was news to Kid.

"Why, yes," Mr. Stewart broke in. "They say it was like a moving picture. And Mr. Winfeld here was stumbling along and holding you on. How improper!"

All laughed but Buck and Doris. Although the guest of honor this young lady was very quiet for the rest of the banquet.

Just before the party broke up Kid handed her a wrapped parcel.

"I was going to keep this as a memento of a rough and rather warm journey," he said gravely, "but now, as you are going to be married, you might like to keep it for the same reason."

Doris slowly opened the package. It contained her long missing belt and compass. She had had it in her hand when Kid found her unconscious. He then had put it in his pocket. Doris' thoughts swiftly winged the circle of events leading up to the time that she was overcome by smoke in the cabin. Like a flash Buck's perfidy in taking the credit upon himself for her rescue was only too apparent. He

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had also received perfectly unwarranted rewards in the nature of familiarities,—most natural to bestow upon a favored heroic suitor. Did Doris place a fluttering hand upon her bosom and faint? She did not! Instead she turned to Kid Winfeld and sweetly said, "Thank you, Mr. Winfeld. This indeed is a memento. I do expect to be married,—sometime. Before I am, I want you to come to Toledo to celebrate the occasion with me. Will you promise to do it?"

There was something in her eyes that Kid Winfeld thought he understood. He promptly concluded that no girl would like to admit before witnesses that she had been the dupe of a "guy like B. Taylor, Jr."

"I shall be delighted. You can rest assured that I will be in Toledo in a few days. The Dome people have bought my claim and I can get away as soon as the transaction is completed."

There was an undertone in this commonplace talk that affected every one at the table. They all conversed glibly among themselves and tried to look unconscious, until Buck Taylor impatiently pushed back his chair.

"Excuse me for breaking up the party," he blurted out, "but I've taken quite a chastening to-day. I must get ready to start south in the

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morning. Good evening, people." He stalked out of the room, with something akin to murder in his mean and dishonest heart.

The tension relaxed. Somehow it seemed to the others that a crisis had passed. Kid's remaining guests soon bade him good night. He caught a look from Doris that made his heart beat double time. He wished to follow her, but a natural tactful instinct made him refrain. He was sure that the circumstances were not propitious.

That night he stayed in the hotel. He wanted to be near her. As he undressed he felt elated and downcast by turns. What right had he,—a gambler's son,—to aspire to the hand of a wonderful girl like Doris.

"No chance!" he would mournfully decide.

Then the clever way in which his lawyer had brought out the evidence of his legitimacy and name, almost entirely for Doris' benefit, in spite of the fact that most of this evidence was irrelevant to the case in hand, would occur to him, and he would smile. But then he remained but a gambler's son still. He could not get around that. He went to bed with his head in a whirl.

Buck left for Toledo to learn just how deeply his interests were involved. Doris, accompanied by her companion, left the following day. Although he had had no opportunity to interview

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her Kid Winfeld found in his box a note which ran as follows,

“You have our address in Toledo. I am at home nearly every afternoon to some miners and a certain type of gambler.

D. Sherman.”

• • • •

The Dome interests may have had reason to feel that they were being unduly hurried by a too impatient vendor. If it had not been that Kid's claim was unusually interesting they would have refused to be rushed. Two hundred thousand dollars or so in cash was a great deal of money to pay out at forty-eight hours notice. But Kid Winfeld took the train just that space of time after Miss Sherman,—his money safely to his credit in the bank.

As the young man, now a comparatively wealthy personage, travelled south he could not but dwell upon the inference he had possibly read into the little speech that Doris had made to him at the dinner. A dozen times he surreptitiously reread her note.

“At least the note is real,” he would declare, patting the pocket that held it, while doubting the reality of her friendly speech. He did not feel any great elation over the success of his plans. He had taken too much punishment in

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the last few months, for the culmination of them to experience now any surprise. The action had been too rapid for him to realize the net results. Money he had. But there was something that he needed vastly more; and as he neared Toledo he feared that he was getting on unfamiliar ground and where he would not show to advantage. It was this sensation of timidity that inspired him to go first to Ames & Co.'s office, rather than to the lady of his desire.

"'Low, Ames,'" thus he greeted the delighted "Whole darn works of Ames & Co."

"Boy, O, boy," grinned the other. "I want to congratulate you! This thing went like clock-work. Sit down! We have cleaned up a fortune, and can jail that old reprobate of a Taylor, if you just say the word. You are some bird!"

Kid finally succeeded in releasing the hand that Charlie was pumping up and down to emphasize his remarks.

"Well, what is he doing now? How does he stand? Have you coaxed those women clients of yours back into the fold?"

"All but those poor Green girls and some other folks who think that Taylor knows more about mine stocks than I do. I don't care so much about the others, but it seems the Green sisters eventually put in nearly everything they

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had, and are facing ruin. You see some so-called spiritualists advised them to buy and have influenced them further to hold on. We could not buy their stock and, of course, Taylor doesn't have to take it if they won't sell."

"I see. Say, just who are these Green sisters? Nice decent people?"

"The best ever. Friends of the Sherman's and all that crowd."

"Friends of the Sherman's, you say?"

"Yes, I think so; that same crowd anyway. They didn't earn their money: they inherited it. It seems deplorable. They are not trained to make a living, and what they are going to do, I don't know."

"Let's see," Kid Winfeld considered the situation. "Spiritualists, you say made them buy the stock? Where do these fakirs live,—if they are fakirs?"

Ames had the address looked up and handed it to his client. The client then gave him directions not to start any suits against the Taylors until he gave the word. He left the office.

Half an hour later Madame Response and Klondyke Kedy received a call from a certain "Mr. Trent." The Taylors had not been paying any princely retainers of late, and in fact, Taylor Sr., had ordered Kedy roughly out of his office, telling him that there was nothing

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more "doing," and to "beat it." Other business had been dull for the necromancers, so it was with a gracious and ingenious smile that they welcomed their unexpected caller. As quick character reading seemed to be a talent common to both parties, it did not take either side long to learn the other's wishes.

An hour later "Trent" had Ames on the telephone. Shortly thereafter the fluttering and worried Green sisters received an invitation from Madame Response to attend a special séance that was to take place that night. They accepted with alacrity.

The scene in the "laboratory" of the mediums had about it the same familiar, mysterious atmosphere. If anything, the partners in the ghost trade worked even more smoothly and psychically together.

"Monsieur Kedy is tremendously vibrant tonight," Madame confided in a whisper to her guests.

And indeed he was. Five hundred dollars in good American money had vibrated his very soul.

"What type of manifestation is it going to be?" vibrated Miss Bessie.

"I cannot tell yet," re-vibrated Madame.

"O, I am so tense!" vibrated also the other Green sister.

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“O!” they then vibrated in unison.

They were sitting around a table. Kedy had gone into a trance.

“His control! He writes!” Thus Madame announced the form of her partner’s demonstration.

Slowly Kedy relaxed; then he seemed to stiffen in his chair and incoherently protest. Three times he repeated this relaxing and epileptic performance with unintelligible mumblings. Then with the hesitating motions of a blind man he pushed a blank piece of paper beneath the light hanging over the center table. Almost imperceptibly the lights died out to a bare glimmer and then came on again. Letters commenced to appear upon the paper as if written by an unseen hand. A dozen words, perfectly meaningless to the Green sisters, were finally completed. Then Kedy had an awful soul struggle with some unseen entity.

“Go back to your grave!” he unexpectedly declaimed in a sepulchral voice.

The Green sisters shuddered while Madame herself shrank toward them in horror.

“It’s Old Pete,” she whispered. “He is the spirit of a murdered miner who believes that Monsieur Kedy should take an interest in him. What’s this?” she exclaimed.

Her guests jumped.

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The paper that had rested beneath the lamp was moving across the tablecloth as if being slid along by some mysterious force. It stopped at the edge and then slipped to the floor. The Hindoo servant, materialized from somewhere, stooped and picked it up. He replaced it on the table. Then the paper fluttered as if blown by the wind and again rested beneath those varying and mysterious lights.

In the meantime Kedy sat with his hands in his lap, eyes open in a trance-like stare. He was muttering to his spirit friends. As the paper rested before the Greens, the spaces between the unintelligible and disconnected words were rapidly filled in with others. In a few seconds the message was complete.

“Miracle Mine is the victim of an evil genius. Sell the stock and buy bonds.”

Such was the communication for the Green sisters, and such was the one that was caused to be written by a very good and wise spirit!

The séance was over. The Misses Green went home in a brown study.

The morning after, Buchanan Taylor, Sr., had hardly seated himself in his office when he received two callers.

“Mr. Ames and Mr. Winfeld,” announced the office-boy.

“Show them in,” grimly ordered Taylor.

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The greetings were brief. Our friends declined the proffered chairs.

“Mr. Taylor,” began Ames without preamble, “I have some clients who wish to sell to you their Miracle stock, at par,—the price they paid. Will you take it?”

“How much is it?” Taylor’s eyes had a forbidding expression that might have been construed as denoting disapproval of this proposal.

“Ninety-five thousand shares at a dollar per share.” Ames was quite off-hand as he gave out the sum involved; in fact, his attitude was as debonair as if ninety-five thousand dollars was a mere bagatelle.

“I won’t take it,” declared Taylor firmly.

“No?” questioned Ames sweetly. “Well, I have some clients who wish to prosecute you for selling them stock in the Miracle Mine after misrepresenting the value thereof. What are you going to do about that?”

B. Taylor, Sr., turned and looked out of the window. It was a fine crisp spring day. The sun shone and the sparrows were twittering their little love-notes on the wire just outside. The shape of a great grey State’s Prison seemed to loom up as if materialized by an evil genie just across the street. He had seen it in reality some miles away; but now it seemed very near. This proposition would take nearly his last cent. He

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finally concluded it would be better to be poor and free than to have a bank account and be a prisoner. He turned back and faced his visitors.

“Gentlemen, what assurance have I that I will not be prosecuted by other of your clients later, if I agree to buy this stock? The price of these shares spent in lawyer’s fees will keep me in freedom for several years, or at the worst remain in a trust account to be available to me—eh—later. I would rather be rich and a prisoner than poor and a prisoner. Do you see the point?”

“We see it,” responded Ames quickly. “But I can be responsible only for my clients. What other small stockholders may do I cannot forecast. However, you have my word that my clients will not prosecute you if you take this stock; otherwise, the matter will immediately be placed in the hands of the district-attorney.”

Taylor tried to bargain and temporize. He complimented Kid Winfeld on his cleverness and fairness. He called him his “dear boy,” and finally suggested that they join forces and work together. It was all of no avail. Ames shook his head smilingly but firmly.

“We don’t take that sort of money,” he said, and Winfeld confirmed this with a nod.

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“Well,—send over your stock,” he capitulated at last, and our friends withdrew.

It did not take the Green sisters long to arrive at Ames’ office after his telephone summons. A few minutes later the stock was presented at Taylor’s office, and a certified check was grudgingly tendered in payment. Ames, bent upon making hay while the sun shone, reinvested this in legal securities for trust funds, and the Greens departed, feeling that spiritualism was a most wonderful and wise oracle.

Kid Winfeld waved Ames’ felicitations aside with a modesty as natural to him as breathing.

“You are a wonder, Kid!” he finished; “but what in hell are you going to do with all your money?”

“I am going to give you half the profit on the stock deal.”

“What!” shouted Ames. “Say, Kid, you’re crazy. My commissions don’t amount to a tenth part of it.”

“The commission that I am going to pay does. I could not have pulled this without you.”

“And I couldn’t have even thought of such a scheme without you, old man. I won’t take any such sum.”

Kid insisted. Ames refused. Finally as a compromise Winfeld consented to become a silent partner in the firm of Ames & Co. The

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idea pleased him. It also pleased Ames. He rightly thought that he had acquired an asset in having Kid Winfeld's clear mind available for the firm. That was worth fully as much as the extra capital that meant so much to a conservative banking house.

That afternoon, K. E. Winfeld, banker, plucked up courage and went to call on Doris Sherman. To his surprise and discomfort he discovered Buck Taylor comfortably ensconced in the drawing room waiting for the young lady to put in an appearance.

Their greetings were mutually formal. It never occurred to Kid to withdraw. He simply seated himself and waited in grim silence. Buck regarded him with a baleful glare.

When Doris appeared she showed not one whit of the trepidation that was in her heart. She had, even before the foregoing revelations, uncovered a ruthlessness in Buck's nature that had given her an uncertain feeling about him. As the circumstances responsible for these opinions had been far removed from her daily life, his large way of explaining that such debatable steps were "necessary in the business world," had sufficed to lull her critical doubts. But now that she had to face these two men, such bitter contestants, memories of Buck's unscrupu-

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lous moments flooded her mind and made her nervous. Strange to say she had more confidence in the good behavior of the man who had been described to her as a "low-down camp waif" than she had in that of a man who had been generally accepted in Toledo society as a perfectly eligible character.

As she entered both men rose with equal courtesy.

"How do you do, Mr. Winfeld!"

Kid bowed and blushed and mumbled and fairly devoured her with his eyes.

"Good evening, Mr. Taylor!"

"Low, Doris," he greeted easily. "Sorry that we are not going to have an opportunity for a talk alone."

"O, it's of *no* consequence, I assure you," Doris returned lightly, an edge on her voice.

Buck never batted an eye.

"We are awfully glad to see you," she then said to Kid. "I hear that you have been in town some time. Why, please, have you not honored us with a call before?"

"Sure, that's it," intervened Buck impudently. "I suppose now that you are here you and Charlie Ames are getting a regular man-sized black-jack game going, eh? It is sure a great graft, if you don't like to work. Naturally you

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wouldn't have much time to call on the nice ladies!"

"Buck!" Doris' horrified exclamation of protest rang true to Kid Winfeld.

"Taylor," he said in a steady voice, though his temper was at a white heat, "I do not claim to be wise to the ways of society, but I do not think that this is the time nor the place for you and me to start abusing each other. I would suggest that, out of respect to Miss Sherman, we cut out quarreling until we can meet before men."

"He is right, Buck. Do please be sensible until some other time." Thus did Doris uphold the one to the humiliation of the other.

This was the last straw. Buck's pent-up rage and disappointment at everything boiled over.

"Be sensible?" he repeated thickly. "Be sensible? Why, this camp rat, this gambler,—this—this roughneck has—has nearly ruined father and me. Now he is impudently walking into the house of our friends and trying to worm his way into the good graces of our women! I won't have it!" he almost screamed, his face contracted by rage. "It is up to us to protect our women from such scum! Get out, Winfeld! I order you out, or I'll throw you out!" He advanced toward Kid with menacing suddenness.

Doris threw herself between them.

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“Stop!” she commanded.

Buck paused. Kid had not moved, but he noticed that Buck kept a hand in the right pocket of his coat. He thought quickly.

“Miss Sherman, there may be some truth in what Taylor says — —”

“O, no, no!” denied Doris.

“— — but I will save him the trouble of throwing me out by going of my own accord,— if you wish it. In the meantime, Taylor, you can take your hand off that gun!”

“Gun?” Doris looked at Buck in wide-eyed terror.

“Yes, gun!” snapped Kid. “I may be a camp waif, but I don’t carry deadly weapons into a ladies’ drawing room. Taylor, you are perfectly safe here without the protection of an automatic.”

Buck withdrew his hand from his pocket, and then sensing the interpretation that Doris must put upon this guilty maneuver, he tried to look dignified and deny the accusation. Doris, with the faulty judgment of a girl unsophisticated in a situation where dire jealousy and murder were immanent, insisted that Buck give her the gun. She even tried to reach the pocket in which it lurked. Kid, who perhaps realized the portentousness of the moment more than either of the other two, and actuated by a genuine desire

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to keep his lady's name unblemished by scandal, edged toward the door. Also, two green-horns struggling for the possession of a probably loaded and cocked automatic did not appeal to his western sense of the fitness of things. As he was the cause of the commotion he decided to decamp, warning them, as he did so, to be careful.

The sound of his voice distracted their attention, and his words gave the impression to the desperate Buck that his enemy had been cowed and was on that account about to retire.

"Stand still before you beat it, you hobo!" he shouted, freeing himself with a wrench from the grasp of Doris' searching fingers. "As long as you are here stand and take your medicine!"

Winfeld stood at the command.

"Now, Doris, listen to me. For your sake and his safety I am going to tell you something of this pretender and intruder; and it's true. He won't deny it. This mother of his whom he proved was safely married—in time—was a common street-walker when George Winfeld married her! And this Kid himself don't know who his father might have been, nor does any one else. She was a 'kitchen pot of many covers.' . . ."

Kid Winfeld caught his breath. His face had gone the hue of chalk. In a gesture of sup-

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plication and pain he threw the back of his hand across his eyes and staggered out of the room. One half suppressed sob was the only sound he uttered.

"You rotten beast!" hissed Doris, as she comprehended the enormity of this attack.

"Well, if you girls insist upon entertaining these unknowns, you had better learn their history, that's all," sneered Buck triumphantly. "I — —" he got no further.

"Leave me this instant!" Doris pointed to the door, her head up and her eyes flashing. "Beside you, Kid Winfeld is a saint in Heaven. Get out! Who was your mother? You are an unmitigated coward, liar and swindler. Go!" And without waiting for her guest to obey she gathered her dainty dress about her and stepping as though passing out of the filth of a pigsty, swept by him and disappeared.

"O, hell!" cursed Buck.

Assuming his coat and hat he slammed the front door behind him.

Charlie Ames was just sitting down to dinner when his new partner was announced. He met him in the library.

"Just in time for a bite, Mr. Winfeld," he invited, shaking hands; then catching the expres-

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sion upon Kid's face he exclaimed, "why, man dear, are you sick?"

Winfeld shook his head doubtfully. "Yes and no. I am going south for a while. I must. It's important."

"Why? What for?" demanded Ames, looking worried.

"If I don't, I'll disgrace you and — — and some one else — by shooting a — skunk. That's all. I cannot tell you any more just now. My address will be the Ponce de Leon Hotel, Palm Beach. And here is a note that I wish you would deliver personally. Goodby."

Ames found himself alone holding a missive addressed to Doris Sherman. He was looking out into an empty hall.

The next morning Ames delivered the note. Doris read as follows:

"Dear Miss Sherman,—

I cannot disprove what Taylor said about mother. I think that it would be difficult for any son to do so. To me she was an angel and is now, please God.

Goodby,

Kid Edwin Winfeld."

Doris wept bitterly when she had finished

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reading. Ames looked wise and waited. Then they had a long quiet chat.

• • • • •

Two days later a bell-boy knocked on Kid's door in the palm shaded hotel.

"Letter for you, sir. Thank you, sir. Is there an answer, sir?"

"Wait! Yes; here, tell the lady that I will be there."

The bell-hop jigged down the corridor, whistling a merry fox-trot as he jingled the two half dollars together in his pocket.

Kid's note had run as follows:

"Dear Pardner,—

I am here with the man, who, I was led to believe, is my true and moral father. It is a wise child that knows the antics of the past generation.

I shall be at the Fountain of the Faun at eleven and command you to be there.

Doris Sherman."

• • • • •

Was it a paradox, that shortly after this rendezvous, there adorned the finger of a cherished darling of high society, an amazing blue diamond which had probably scintillated over

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more no-limit card games, than any other gem in this great melting-pot we call, America.

.

Dutchy Messer got "ten years" which effected a complete cure of his alcoholic tendencies.

The Taylors, senior and junior, most unostentatiously migrated to parts unknown, even before the announcement of an engagement which stirred Toledo to its depths.

A few weeks after the wedding of K. E. Winfeld, Old Hal, in the far north, was delighted to receive a letter from his master, ordering him south with all five of the faithful Danes.

"Next thing we know Kid will have those big dogs hitched to a perambulator, or something," the irrepressible Charles Ames was overheard to remark.



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